16

NARSINGHPUR

CENTRAL PROVINCES DISTRICT GAZETTEERS

NARSINGHPUR DISTRICT.

A VOLUME DESCRIPTIVE

EDITED BY R. V. RUSSELL, I.C.S.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

The extant Settlement Reports on the Narsinghpur District are those of Mr. (Sir Charles) Grant published in 1866 and of Mr. De Brett (1896). Sir Charles Grant's Report is very interesting and well written and quotations from it have been freely inserted in this volume. Mr. De Brett's remarks on agriculture and his description of the recent settlement have been reproduced in the Gazetteer. One or two good notes have been submitted from the District office by Mr. C. B. N. Cama. The chapter on History and the notices of castes have been compiled with the help of Mr. Hīra Lāl, Assistant Superintendent of Gazetteer. This volume is complete in itself and may be used without reference to the B Volume, which [illegible] on of administrative statistics.

NAGPUR, R. V. R.

15th December 1905.

NARSINGHPUR DISTRICT GAZETTEER.

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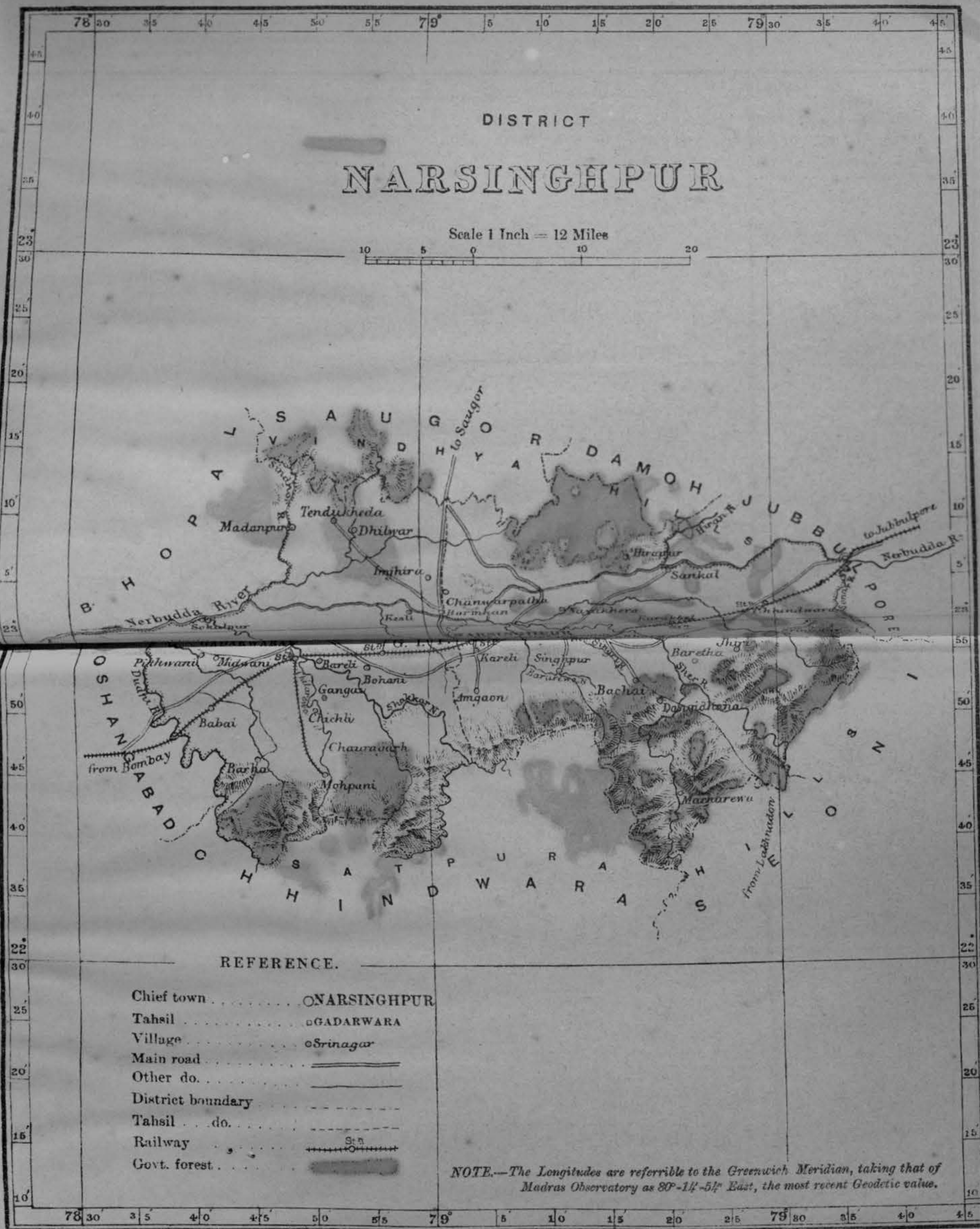
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LIST OF DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS, NARSINGHPUR DISTRICT, FROM 1879.

		From	To
R. Logan, Deputy Commissioner		... 28-11-79	8- 4-81
G. J. Nicholls,	,,	... 9- 4-81	6- 7-83
S. H. Hennessy,	,,	... 7- 7-83	19-10-83
J. W. Tawney,	,,	... 20-10-83	19- 1-86
A. Bloomfield,	,,	... 20- 1-86	18- 2-91
F. A. T. Phillips,	,,	... 19- 2-91	16-11-96
L. E. P. Gaskin,	,,	... 17-11-96	13-12-96
A. D. Younghusband,	,,	... 14-12-96	25- 3-97
E. A. DeBrett,	,,	... 26- 3-97	20-12-97
A. S. Womack,	,,	... 21-12-97	9- 5-98
L. E. P. Gaskin,	,,	... 10- 5-98	12- 2-99
R. W. G. Marshall,	,,	... 13- 2-99	12- 3-99
L. E. P. Gaskin,	,,	... 13- 3-99	23-10-99
E. A. DeBrett,	,,	... 24-10-99	4- 3-01
Mehdi Hasan,	,,	... 5- 3-01	16-12-01
L. A. G. Clarke,	,,	... 17-12-01	2- 3-02
Raghunath Rao,	,,	... 3- 3-02	2- 4-02
L. A. G. Clarke,	,,	... 3- 4-02	20- 7-02
J. T. Marten,	,,	... 21- 7-02	14-11-02
A. Mayne,	,,	... 15-11-02	10- 6-03
Ganpat Rao Lothe,	,,	... 11- 6-03	24- 6-03
C. A. Clarke,	,,	... 25- 6-03	4-10-03
A. Mayne,	,,	... 5-10-03	19- 6-04
E. Batchelor,	,,	... 20- 6-04	4-11-04
L. A. G. Clarke,	,,	... 5-11-04	



Prepared specially for the Supdt., C. P. Gazetteer Revision, from the ¼" District Map of 1904, and from an original supplied by him.

Photo. S. I. O., Calcutta.

No. 124 E. & 125 E., Supdt., C. P. Gazetteer.—May 05.—400.

NARSINGHPUR DISTRICT.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

BOUNDARIES AND PHYSICAL FEATURES.

Physical aspects.

1. [1] The Narsinghpur District (22° 45′ to 23° 15′ N. and 78° 38′ to 79° 38′ E.) belongs to the Nerbudda Division of the Central Provinces and is situated in the upper half of the Nerbudda valley between Jubbulpore and Hoshangābād. On the north it is bounded by the Bhopāl State and the Saugor, Damoh and Jubbulpore Districts, on the south by Chhindwāra, and on the east by Seoni and Jubbulpore. The total area of the District is 1,976 square miles. It is divided into two tahsīls, Gādarwāra lying to the west and Narsinghpur to the east. The bulk of the District is situated to the south of the Nerbudda, and occupies a space of 15 or 20 miles between the river and the northern range of the Sātpurā plateau. The Nerbudda forms the northern boundary for a considerable length of its course in the District, and immediately beyond the river the southern sçarp of the Vindhyan range extends like a line of cliffs almost along its banks. A strip of land comprised in the former parganas of Chānwarpātha, Tendūkhedā and Hīrāpur, with Pitehrā and some other villages recently transferred from Saugor lies north of the Nerbudda. The extreme length of the District from east to west is about 75 miles, and the greatest breadth about 40 miles.

[1] This description of the District is largely reproduced from Mr. (Sir) C. Grant's Settlement Report (1866).

The valley of the Nerbudda.

2. The bulk of the District lies in the first of the wide alluvial basins, which, alternating with rocky gorges, give so varied a character to the course of the Nerbudda. The valley begins just beyond the Marble Rocks at Bherāghāt, about 8 miles west of Jubbulpore and fifteen miles east of the Narsinghpur District boundary, and extends as far as Handia in the Hoshangābād District or for a distance of nearly 250 miles. In the opinion of geologists, the basins, of which this is one, were originally marine lakes which were 'more or less intimately connected 'with each other, and were fed by a slowly flowing river 'down which clayey sediment was carried, and distributed 'in a gradual and uniform manner over a considerable 'extent of country.'[1] On the conglomerate and clay thus deposited lie twenty feet of rich alluvial soil. The face of the Sātpurā range, overlooking the valley, is generally regular and probably nowhere rises more than 500 feet above the lowlands, and runs in a line almost parallel to the river. The southern scarp of the Vindhyas, though generally abrupt, is irregular in its alignment, twice abutting on the river bed, and twice opening out into bay-like curves which contain the cultivated portions of the District north of the Nerbudda. Still the effect of the hill lines, viewed from a little distance, is sufficiently regular not to interfere with the otherwise compact conformation of the District. A broad strip, walled in on either hand by low hill ranges, and green from end to end with young wheat, such is the appearance of this section of the valley in the winter months.

Hills.

3. The hill country included in the District is not extensive. North of the Nerbudda, the crest of the Vindhyas, overlooking the valley, forms the boundary in the Chānwarpātha tract, though further east the Pitehrā and Hirāpur blocks include a portion of the hills some 60 or 70 square miles in extent. The Hīrāpur hills are perhaps

[1] Geological Survey of India, Vol. II, para. 2, page 283.

the wildest part of the District, as the passes from the plain are generally difficult of access, and the country is more broken and precipitous than the tableland further north ; but it is not sufficiently extensive to form an appreciable element in its total composition. South of the Nerbudda the Bachai and Srīnagar parganas near the eastern border, though broken by spurs of the Sātpurā range, contain more valley than hill, while the strip of the range included in the District west of Bachai seldom exceeds three or four miles in depth. In the plain, except where the soil has been denuded by the action of water, undulations in the surface are few and insignificant, with the exception of the Chānwarpātha tract north of the Nerbudda, where frequent isolated peaks shoot up in the very heart of the black soil. Notwithstanding this, Chānwarpātha contains excellent land and some villages as fertile as any of those south of the river.

The open country.

4. In other parts of the District the rich level is but seldom broken, except by occasional mounds of gravel or *kankar*, which are most serviceable for village sites. The hard black soil after rain softens into a stiff bog in which every step is a difficulty. And hence the preference for sites often bare and repulsive in appearance, and the comparative poverty of the crops on fields immediately surrounding villages, in direct contrast with other localities where such fields are the most valuable in the whole area. The inequalities of the surrounding surface are sometimes so far advantageous that they facilitate the construction of artificial tanks and reservoirs, in themselves picturesque and generally adorned by the graceful domed temples, which here take the place of the needle-shaped spires so common in the Hindu shrines of Upper India. There are few villages which are not embellished by deep mango groves and old pīpal and tamarind trees. Indeed the commonest names of villages are those derived from trees. Thus Piparia (from the pīpal), Imālia (from the *imlī* or tamarind), Umaria (from the *umar* or wild fig) abound in every part of the District. Less universal but still frequent are

Amgaon, the mango village, and Sāgoni from the *sāgun* or teak tree. But as soon as the limits of the *havelī* or black-soil tracts are passed, the characteristics of the country change. Below either range of hills, but more especially on the Sātpurā side, are broad belts of red gravelly soil, which merge through woody borders into the lower slopes of the highlands. The wheat of the valley is here replaced by rice and the poorer rain-crops, forest trees are substituted for mango groves, and mountain streams instead of tanks give water to the villages. The country is in short less rich and productive, but more picturesque and beautiful. The open glades covered by short sward and dotted with old mahuā trees suggest the idea of English park scenery, and the river gorges are often of rare beauty, combining as they do all the grand features of hill scenery and tropical vegetation, with a moist freshness which is the one thing wanting to the surrounding forests.

Rivers.

5. The Nerbudda is the centre of the drainage system. The fall in this part of its course is less than 2 feet in a mile, and in the whole length of 80 miles within the District there is only one waterfall of about 10 feet nearly opposite the village of Umaria to the north-east of Narsinghpur. Although however the characteristic vehemence of the stream is much modified in this section, yet it retains throughout the narrow basaltic bed and the high precipitous banks which are its distinctive features. Running in a confined unyielding channel through a narrow valley, its floods are so swift and sudden as to impose serious difficulties in the way either of navigation or the diversion of its waters to canals. The Nerbudda is fed almost entirely from the south, as the watershed of the Vindhyan tableland stands little back from the southern face of the hills. Its principal affluents are the Sher and the Shakkar, which, with their tributaries, the Māchārewā and Chītārewā, take their rise on the Sātpurā plateau and are essentially mountain torrents throughout. Their streams, rapid but irregular, pour through deep rocky channels, fringed on either hand with

unbroken series of ravines. Here and there however more especially in the Shakkar and Chītārewā, their beds open out into small oases of the richest alluvial deposits, which are tilled like gardens with the finer kinds of sugarcane and vegetables. Second to these in importance are the Dudhī, Bārūrewā and Soner, the latter resembling the rivers already described, but the two former differing from them in the sandy character of their channels, which are little utilised except by an occasional melon-bed. On the north the Hiran and Sindhor rivers are tributaries of the Nerbudda, the junction of the Hiran being on the western and that of the Sindhor on the eastern border of the District. The Sindhor, for some miles before its union, forms a natural boundary between the District and Bhopāl State, and similarly to the south of the Nerbudda the courses of the Dudhī and Soner mark the western and eastern borders. The smaller rivers are too numerous for separate notice, but it may be mentioned, as an illustration of the extraordinary rapidity of rise which is common to them all, that the Singrī, a little stream which rises not ten miles from Narsinghpur and Kandelī, has been more than once known to inundate the town of Kandelī, and to occasion serious loss both of life and property to the townspeople. The Shakkar also floods very suddenly, and at Gādarwāra people are occasionally caught and overwhelmed while crossing its bed, which at the moment of their start may have been a stretch of sand about 300 yards wide with a small stream flowing through it. As already noticed, the passage of these rapid streams through the soft alluvial soil scores the country in the immediate neighbourhood of their courses with a wide network of ravines, which render it for some distance unculturable. The Nerbudda, in spite of its slight fall, and the Sher with its tributary the Māchārewā have the most marked systems of ravines. The Shakkar with its tributary the Chītārewā appears to be less violent. Although however the action of water on the soil is very marked in the immediate neighbourhood of the rivers, it does not, as a rule, extend to any great distance from the banks, and

leaves the greater part of the country unbroken and level. The rivers are of no use for irrigation, and, as the majority of them are only mountain torrents, are unsuited for boat traffic.

Elevation.

6. The elevation of the plain country is between 1,150 and 1,200 feet. Narsinghpur station is 1,185 feet above mean sea-level and Gādarwāra 1,158. The highest portion of the District is in the extreme south-west near the Dudhī river, where the peak of Unchākhedā, just beyond the Narsinghpur boundary, is 2,999 feet high. Sindker, on the southern border near the Shakkar river, has an elevation of 2,669 feet, Hasanpur somewhat further east of 2,551, Kishnapur of 1,982, Chānwarpātha in the south-east of 2,120, Sarrā of 2,294, and Ramgarhā south-east of Srīnagar of 2,047. Bachai is 1,507 feet high and Srīnagar 1,371. The highest point in the north of the District is Hīrāpur Hill Station with an elevation of 1,653 feet. Tendūkhedā is 1,281 feet high, Kanerī 1,379, and Barmhān 1,452.

GEOLOGY.

Alluvium.

7. The valley of the Nerbudda from Jubbulpore to Hardā is a great alluvial flat, chiefly composed of a stiff reddish, yellowish or brownish clay with numerous intercalated bands of sand and gravel. *Kankar* abounds throughout the deposit, and iron granules are of frequent occurrence. Occasionally pebbles and sand are found cemented together by carbonate of lime so as to form a hard, compact conglomerate, this rock being especially developed at the base of the alluvial deposits. The clay is frequently quite devoid of stratification, but appears never to attain any great thickness without sandy layers intervening. The river in many places cuts through the clays, sands and gravels to the underlying rock (usually belonging to the Transition series), and the section of old alluvial deposits on the banks of the stream never greatly exceeds 100 feet in depth, this being about the usual difference in elevation

between the bed of the Nerbudda and the general surface of the alluvial plain in the neighbourhood of the river. But in a boring which was made at Sūkakherī, north of Mohpāni, a depth of 491 feet was attained without the base of the alluvial deposits being reached, and throughout the thickness of nearly 500 feet no change of importance was detected in the alluvial formations. The depth of the alluvial deposits is sufficient to prove that they filled a rocky basin, for the bed of the Nerbudda at the point where it leaves the alluvial plain near Handia, and commences to run through the rocky channel which extends to Barwai, is not more than 200 feet below the level of the surface at Gādarwāra and Sūkakherī, and the valley is surrounded by higher rocky ground in every other direction. A slight prolongation of the alluvial basin to the south-west in the direction of Hardā, the prevalence of alluvium in parts of Nimār, and the circumstance that there is a great break by which the railway traverses the Sātpurā range, immediately east of Asīrgarh, may indicate that the upper Nerbudda formerly joined the Tāpti in Khāndesh, and that the lower valley of the former river, as it now exists, is due to changes of level in the later post-tertiary period. The surface of the Nerbudda alluvium is undulating and evidently denuded by the action of rains and streams. There is a slight slope of the surface to the westward throughout the plain, the fall in a distance of 200 miles being probably about 300 feet. The deposits have yielded fossils consisting of shells and the bones both of extinct and existing animals as the elephant, rhinoceros and hippopotamus. The only trace of man hitherto found in them consists of a chipped stone scraper or hatchet made out of Vindhyan quartzite, discovered eight miles north of Gādarwāra.

Gondwāna rocks.

8. The Sātpurā hills to the south of the Nerbudda valley belong to the Gondwāna formation, so named after the old native division of India which comprised the greater part of the Central Provinces. This great system of beds, which corresponds to the marine older and middle

Mesozoic and probably the upper Palæozoic formations of other countries, is chiefly composed of sandstones and shales, which appear to have been deposited in fresh water and probably by rivers. Remains of animals are rare, and the few which have hitherto been found, belong chiefly to the lower vertebrate classes of reptiles, amphibians and fishes. Plant remains are more common and evidence of several successive floras has been detected. The formation is divided into the Upper and Lower Gondwānas according to the character of the fossils found in them and each of these is further subdivided into groups. At the base of the system occurs the Talchir group consisting mainly of greenish silt beds breaking up into small splinter-like fragments and hence called needle shales, and greenish brown or whitish felspathic sandstones, in either of which pebbles or large boulders are often irregularly scattered. The Tālchers are overlaid by the Dāmuda series which is made up of thick-bedded often coarse felspathic sandstones, with subordinate beds of carbonaceous shale and coal. The Upper Gondwāna system includes the Mahādeo group of Gondwāna rocks to which the sandstone of the Pachmarhī hills belongs. The rocks consist chiefly of beds of coarse sandstones and conglomerate, marked with ferruginous bands and attaining a thickness of 10,000 feet. The sandstones form high ranges of hills and often weather into vertical scarps of great height, making conspicuous cliffs in the forest, and contrasting strongly with the black precipices of the Deccan traps, and the rounded irregular masses of the more granitoid metamorphic rocks. Scarcely any fossils have been found in these rocks.

Vindhyan and Transition Rocks.

9. The Vindhyan hills to the north of the Nerbudda belong to the Vindhyan series of rocks named after this range, which is anterior in point of age to the Gondwānas. The rocks in Saugor, Damoh and Narsinghpur are included in the Upper Vindhyan division of the series. They consist of fine, hard red masses of sandstone with alternations to shale. There is only one important band of

limestone. Beautiful ripple marks which occur on the rocks show their aqueous origin and evidence the shallowness of the depositing waters. Rocks of the Transition or sub-metamorphic formation and consisting of low hills of cherty limestone and breccia are found in the Chānwarpātha tract to the north of the Nerbudda, and outcrops of the Transition rocks underlying the Gondwāna formation are also seen south of the Nerbudda. The rocks are so termed because they have been partly crystallised. The iron-ore deposits of Tendūkhedā are found among rocks of this class, the ore occurring in association with much disturbed limestones and quartzites. The marble discovered recently in Bagāspur probably also belongs to the Transition rocks.

BOTANY.

Forest Trees.

10. [1] The forests of Narsinghpur are in no way remarkable, and with the exception of Wardhā, probably no District in the Province is so devoid of waste tracts. Parts of the valley of the Dudhī in Gādarwāra, of the Sher and Māchārewā in Bachai, and of the Umar and Soner in Srīnagar, and some of the hilly area north of the Nerbudda come legitimately under the definition of forest land; but they contain little good timber except mahuā trees, which are too valuable for purposes of sustenance to allow of their being cut down. Teak grows somewhat densely on slopes and undulating ground, but the trees are almost invariably crooked or otherwise defective. Leaf umbrellas are made from teak-leaves; its value as a timber-tree need not be explained. *Sāj* (*Terminalia tomentosa*) is principally found on level ground where the soil is clayey. The timber is heavy and soon rots if sunk in the ground. The *anjan* (*Hardwickia binata*) is found in the south-west and also in roadside avenues, and somewhat resembles the English birch; its shoots grow very straight and are valuable as

[1] The notices of trees in this section are mainly taken from Gamble's "Manual of Indian Timbers" (London, Low, Marston, 1902) and Nairne's "Flowering Plants of Western India" (London, W. H. Allen).

rafters. The *dhaurā* (*Anogeissus latifolia*) is a large handsome tree with broad leaves and grey shining bark. It is highly valued for its strong and hard timber, but this splits in seasoning and unless kept dry is not very durable. It is used for the handles of axes, axles, and agricultural implements. The tree yields a gum which is extensively used in calico printing. *Lendia* (*Lagerstroemia parviflora*) is another tree whose timber is largely used. *Tendū* (*Diospyros tomentosa*) is found both as a shrub and a large tree. Its fresh green and pink shoots spring up in open ground as the hot weather begins. Its leaves are used for lining pits in which grain is stored, and the fruit is eaten. *Sāleh* (*Boswellia serrata*) is a tree of moderate size, whose narrow pointed leaflets, resembling those of the *nīm*, and drooping branches, give it somewhat the look of an English acacia. Its grey flaky bark is also noticeable. Its wood is used for fuel and charcoal, and the sacred pole used in marriage ceremonies is always of *sāleh* wood. *Ghiria* (*Chloroxylon Swietenia*), called the Indian satin-wood, yields an ornamental timber. *Bījā* (*Pterocarpus Marsupium*) is an important tree, whose timber is much used for door and window-frames and furniture. It seasons well and takes a fine polish, but is full of resin and stains yellow when damp. There is a proverb 'The house for which *bījā* is used, gets quickly built.' Its leaves are an excellent fodder. *Khair* (*Acacia Catechu*) is common in the Ramkhiria block of Government forest and is found scattered elsewhere. Its bark is dark brown, much cracked, with short hooked spines in pairs. Its flowers are white or pale yellow. Catechu is made from the wood, which is also used for rice pestles, oil and sugarcane crushers, plough-handles and huqqā-tubes. *Pāpra* (*Gardenia lucida*) is a small tree associated with *khair*. It yields the gum called *dīkāmāli* which is used in the treatment of cattle disease. *Tinsā* (*Ougeinia dalbergioides*) is a common species in mixed forest. Its wood is used for cart poles, agricultural implements and spindles. *Kusum* (*Schleichera trijuga*) is a large tree with bright red leaves and flowers appearing in the hot

weather. The fruit contains a whitish pulp which is eaten. The best quality of lac is grown on this tree. *Haldū* (*Adina cordifolia*) is a beautiful and important tree, scattered over the forests, and preferring dry hills. It has large round leaves tinged with red, and buff-coloured flowers. Its timber takes a good polish and is durable, but is rather liable to warp and crack. *Rohnī* (*Soymida febrifuga*) is a large smooth-barked tree with greenish-white flowers, and fruit the size of a small apple. Its bark is bitter and medicinal, and the dark or red wood is heavy and strong and much prized for house building and wood carving. *Siwan* (*Gmelina arborea*) is a large tree, whose timber is also much prized, as it is durable and easily worked. Its fruit is eaten by the hill tribes. *Ganiār* (*Cochlospermum Gossypium*) is a small tree with short thick-spreading branches. It is characteristic of the driest and stoniest slopes and is always conspicuous, its handsome large yellow flowers appearing in the hot weather when the tree is leafless. Its flowers are offered to Mahādeo. It has a soft grey wood, which, if once lighted, remains burning for a long time, so that postal runners carry a piece of it when passing through the forest at night. *Achār* (*Buchanania latifolia*) is a common tree whose bark makes it conspicuous wherever found. The kernel of its fruit called *chironjī* is coated with sugar and sold as a sweetmeat. *Harrā* (*Terminalia Chebula*) is a large tree, common in all forests, whose fruit furnishes the well-known myrabolans of commerce. Country ink is made from the nuts, by mixing them with sulphate of iron and a black dye called *missī* for the teeth. *Palās* or *chheolā* (*Butea frondosa*) is a well-known tree, remarkable for its brilliant scarlet-orange flowers appearing when the tree is quite leafless in the beginning of the hot season. The flowers give a yellowish dye which is used at the Holī festival. The leaves are used for leaf-plates and the lac insect is cultivated on them, and the fibres of its roots make good cordage. *Kullū* (*Sterculia urens*) is a large tree, conspicuous in the hot season when the branches are bare for its light-coloured smooth papery bark. It is characteris-

tic of dry, rocky hills and plateaux, and is useful in reclothing such places with forest. Gonds sometimes roast and eat the seeds. *Shīsham* (*Dalbergia latifolia*) is a large tree which affords the valuable furniture wood, known as 'Bombay blackwood' and in England as rosewood. Well-to-do natives generally have beds made of this wood. *Bhilawān* (*Semecarpus Anacardium*), the marking-nut tree, is easily recognised by its large leaves and fruit consisting of an oblong oblique drupe. The fruit has a thick black pericarp, between the layers of which are the cells containing the corrosive juice used as marking-ink. Its fruit is eaten. *Kohā* (*Terminalia Arjuna*) may be recognised from sāj by its smooth grey bark and narrower leaves. The banks of nullahs and streams are often fringed by a growth of this melancholy-looking tree, which reminds one forcibly of the English alder[1]. *Dhāman* (*Grewia tiliæfolia*) is a moderate sized tree, often found with teak; it is a quick-growing tree and comes up fast in blanks in the forest. The fruit is eaten and the wood is used for shafts, poles, oars, *banhgī*-poles and all purposes for which a strong and elastic timber is required. *Amaltās* (*Cassia fistula*) is a beautiful and conspicuous tree with long pendulous racemes of bright yellow flowers like the English laburnum. *Jamrāsi* (*Elæodendron Roxburghii*) is a graceful tree with ovate, shining leaves, small yellow flowers and a yellowish-green fruit, the size of a cherry. Its wood is used for cabinet work and picture frames, and the root is said to be a specific against snake-bite. *Kūmhi* (*Careya arborea*) is a large tree found in ravines and valleys and scarce in dry mixed forest. It has a dark grey bark with large finely scented leaves turning red in the cold season, a few very large white flowers and a large fruit.

Shrubs.

11. *Mainphal* (*Randia dumetorum*) is a thorny shrub or small tree. Its fruit is used to poison fish, and when ripe is roasted and eaten. *Dudhī* (*Holarrhena antidysenterica*) is a small and widespread tree, appearing

[1] From a note on Botany kindly furnished by Mr. C. E. Low.

regularly in open grass lands and useful in reclothing waste patches. The bark, leaves and fruit are all used medicinally; the bark as a tonic and febrifuge and in dysentery. *Makoi* (*Zizyphus Ænoplia*) is a straggling climbing shrub with small but very strong thorns, difficult to cut. It is used for fencing fields, and the fruit, which turns yellow to black and is of about the size of a pea, is eaten. *Karondā* (*Carissa Carandas*) is a thorny shrub or small tree, with white or slightly tinted fragrant flowers appearing from February to April and a small dark purple fruit, which is used for making tarts and preserves. A superior variety called Rai-Karondā is cultivated. *Dhavai* (*Woodfordia floribunda*) is a small much branched shrub with numerous bright red flowers appearing in the hot season. It is a very common shrub. Its flowers give a dye and are also used as a medicine in bowel complaints. *Bhāt* or *bhānt* (*Clerodendron infortunatum*) is a common shrub in old cultivated land and under trees in the open country, with pinkish-white flowers. *Casearia tomentosa*, known as *kāla motia*, is another common small tree.

Trees of the open country.

12. The cultivated parts of the District are usually marked by the presence near villages of groves of mango, tamarind, pipal, *bel* and similar trees of a useful and semi-sacred character. Beyond the limits of the alluvial soil, mahuā, *achār* and other species dot the belt of open grass land. *Babūl* (*Acacia arabica*) is a common tree and is largely planted on roadside avenues. The hardness and durability of its wood are well known. *Semar* (*Bombax malabaricum*) is the cotton tree. The cotton is made into tinder and is also used to stuff quilts. The root is used as a medicine. This tree is called *Yamadruma* or the tree of Yama, the god of death. *Jāmun* (*Eugenia Jambolana*) is another tree of the open country, often grown in avenues. It is a large handsome tree, all smooth, with white flowers and fruits, the size and shape of an olive, which ripen at the beginning of the rains and are eaten by all classes. *Siris* (*Albizzia Lebbek* and *odoratissima*) is usually cultivated in

avenues and gardens. One species has white and the other yellow flowers, with long pods. *Kadamb* (*Anthocephalus Cadamba*) is a large tree with handsome yellow blossoms. It is sacred to Krishna and its flowers are in great repute as a love-charm. *Gūlar* (*Ficus glomerata*), one of the common figs with banyan and pīpal, is a large tree found scattered in the plains and planted on roadside avenues. The fruit is made into curry and is also eaten when ripe. The *sītāphal* or custard apple (*Anona squamosa*) usually grows wild on the sites of old forts, and is also cultivated in gardens. The *chhīnd* or wild date palm (*Phœnix sylvestris*) is not particularly common and its juice is seldom drunk. The dwarf palm (*Phœnix acaulis*) is found in valleys and on moist soil.

Grasses.[1]

13. Most villages have certain areas under grass which are called bīrs and situated in hollows or on the banks of streams, where there is sufficient moisture in the soil to ensure a good growth. The best kinds of grass are *kel* (*Andropogon annulatus*) and *musyāl*. *Musyāl* may be either of two similar grasses, *Iseilema Wightii* and *Iseilema laxum*, but is probably the latter, or it may be that both are called by the same name. In *Iseilema laxum* the pedicels have tufts of hair at the base and *musyāl* is said to be so called because it is bearded. *Iseilema Wightii* has reddish coloured stems and spikelets, which render it a conspicuous object from a considerable distance. All the above are good fodder grasses, and in Narsinghpur they are the most highly valued. *Musyāl* is said to be the best. They grow mixed. It is said that the appearance of these grasses, in a field infested with *kāns*, is one of the first signs that the grass has run its time and the soil has recovered its vigour. The other common grasses of the Province also occur in Narsinghpur. Among these may be mentioned *ganer* or

[1] The botanical descriptions of certain grasses given in this paragraph are reproduced from J. F. Duthie's "Fodder Grasses of Northern India". (Roorkee, 1888). Mr. A. E. Lowrie, Forest Divisional Officer, has also contributed some information.

gunderī (*Anthistiria scandens*) a coarse luxuriant grass which is eaten readily by horned cattle. It is the high grass of the Baihar plateau, and may be easily recognised by its inflorescence, the spikelets being arranged in short clusters. The clusters of spikelets turn to a bright reddish colour after flowering. The well-known spear grass (*Andropogon contortus*) is almost useless for fodder, as cattle object to it when they can get anything else. It is principally used for thatching. Its local name appears to be *parbī*, but this term sometimes also designates *Andropogon annulatus* or *kel*. Another grass called *sainā* may be *Ischaemum laxum* which Mr. Lowrie stated to be one of the best fodder grasses in Ajmer. It is said to be used locally for covering the leaves of betel-vine gardens. A grass called locally *sukar* may be *sikka*, the vernacular name of *Panicum ciliare* in Seonī and Bālāghāt (Duthie). This is a comparatively small grass with stems $1-1\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, found usually in dry, sandy or rocky ground, and yielding a good fodder. *Bhaber* or *baber* (*Pollinia eriopoda*) is a grass giving an excellent material for cordage for which it is used locally, and now largely employed elsewhere in the manufacture of paper. It is obtained in large quantities from the Sālehchaukā, Chaugān, and Jāmunpāni Government forests. Its stem is $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet or more, and its base belt-like and covered with woolly pubescence. *Mūnj* (*Saccharum ciliare*) belongs to the same genus as *kāns* and sugarcane. It is a tall handsome grass with long narrow leaves, rough at the edges with minute forward prickles. Its spikelets are densely clothed with long white silky hairs. This grass is too coarse to be used for fodder except when quite young. It is stated locally to be employed for making cordage ; weavers' brushes are also made from it, and stands for vessels. *Kāns* (*Saccharum spontaneum*) is a tall grass with long and narrow leaves. The quantity of wool-like pubescence which surrounds the base of the spikelets renders it a conspicuous object. In the Punjab it is considered in some Districts as valuable fodder, but in the Central Provinces its entire disappearance would probably not be regretted. The

aromatic *rūsa* grass (*Andropogon Schoenanthus*) is not common and its oil is not extracted locally. *Barrū* (*Sorghum halepense*) is the grass from which reed pens are made. It is a large-leaved grass, growing chiefly along nullahs, and is considered to be a good fodder grass both for grazing and as hay. A common local phrase used to be '*Barrū kātkar ābād kiyā*' or 'He cut down the *barrū* and founded the village.'[1] *Urai* (*Andropogon squarrosus*) is the khas-khas grass. It affects moist low-lying land. Tatties are made from the fragrant roots. In Northern India it affords good fodder when young, and is much relished by buffaloes (Duthie). Locally its stalks make the brushes with which grain is swept up from the threshing-floors. It cannot be eradicated by ploughing, and is therefore often planted to make field boundaries.[2]

WILD ANIMALS, ETC.

Wild Animals, &c.

14. The wild buffalo is not found in Narsinghpur, and the bison is not a regular resident, but a few occasionally visit the hills on the south-western border between Mohpāni and the Dudhi river during the rains. Tigers are not numerous and usually enter the District from the Seoni and Chhindwāra Districts, wander round for a few days and then leave it again. Panther and bear are to be found in most forests frequenting the low hills. Sāmbhar and nīlgai occur in most of the jungles along the northern and southern borders, the latter being more plentiful in the thinner forests of the Gorakhpur circle. *Chītal* or spotted deer are now scarce in the District and are only seen in a few localities. *Chinkāra* or ravine deer frequent the borders of the forests to the south. The *ghutrī* or barking deer and *chausinghā* or four-horned deer are scarce. Black-buck are numerous in the open country of the Gādarwāra tahsīl, but are scarce in Narsinghpur. The horns do not exceed about 22 inches. Wild pig, sāmbhar and nīlgai do considerable damage to the

[1] Elliott's Hoshangābād Settlement Report. Glossary *s. v.* Burroo.
[2] *Ibid*, *s. v.* Oorai.

crops in villages bordering on the hills. Owing to the absence of *jhīls* or marshes and the scarcity of suitable tanks, duck and snipe are not common. Duck may be found on the reaches of some of the rivers. The grey goose can always be had in the cold weather at one or two places, and the spurred goose (*Plectropterus sarkidiomis*) commonly on tanks. Whistling teal and goose-teal are also to be seen on most tanks. Spurfowl are found in all the forests, but jungle-fowl are very scarce. The painted partridge is obtained in small numbers and the grey partridge is plentiful. The usual species of quail occur, though the large grey quail is generally scarce. Pea-fowl are found all over the District near the forests and in the uncultivated land fringing the ravines of the rivers. Sand-grouse may be had all over the District and are plentiful in certain tracts. Blue-rock pigeon are to be found all over the District, but are by no means plentiful. They frequent a gorge of the Māchārewā river.

RAINFALL AND CLIMATE.

Rainfall.

15. Rainfall is registered at Narsinghpur, Gādarwāra and Mohpāni, the two former places being in the open plain, and the latter at the foot of the Sātpurā hills. Recently registration stations have been opened at Chhindwāra and Tendūkhedā. The average annual rainfall at each of the first three places is as follows:—

Narsinghpur	51 inches.[1]
Gādarwāra	54 ,,
Mohpāni	51 ,,

The statistics for Mohpāni were probably unreliable up to 1883, and from the returns of the ten years 1883 to 1893, it would appear that the fall there is very much the same as at Narsinghpur and Gādarwāra. The annual fluctuations have been considerable, but the rainfall has generally been ample from the agriculturist's point of view. 40 to 45 inches of

[1] The figure for Narsinghpur is the average of the 35 years preceding 1902-03, and those for Gādarwāra and Mohpāni are taken from the Meteorological Memoirs of the Government of India.

rain are quite sufficient for the District if properly distributed, and as wheat grown in heavy black soil is the staple crop, the annual fall is, if anything, excessive for its needs. The rain is too heavy for juār which is scarcely grown in Narsinghpur. If the cold weather rains are excessive, wheat is very liable to rust, though a slight fall at the end of December or the beginning of January is desirable for the crops grown on the lighter soils. The black soil of the Nerbudda valley is wonderfully retentive of moisture and scarcely needs cold weather rain. The rainfall has generally been ample, and only three times in the 33 years between 1866 and 1899 have less than 30 inches been received. The minimum fall recorded was 17 inches in 1868, while in 1895-96 only 29 inches, and in 1899-1900, 25 inches were registered. There was no acute distress in 1868, but the two latter years both witnessed famines. On the other hand, in 15 out of 33 years the rainfall has exceeded 50 inches. The maximum fall recorded was 96 inches in 1891-92. In that year in the month of September alone Narsinghpur received more than 60 inches, which would be a liberal amount for a whole year. In Gādarwāra the rains have been even more regular, and while it has only received less than 30 inches in the one year, 1899-1900, when 25 inches were registered, the rainfall has exceeded 50 inches in 25 out of 33 years. In 1867, 117 inches of rain were registered here. The average fall at Narsinghpur during the five wet months has been 47 inches, distributed as follows : June 8, July 15½, August 13, September 9, October 1½. This quantity is amply sufficient for rice, and is heavier than that recorded for some of the rice Districts. During the remaining seven months, Narsinghpur has received only 2½ and Gādarwāra less than 2 inches on an average. As a rule the crops are more likely to suffer from excess than from deficiency of rainfall. The spring crops are also liable to damage from frost, especially in the vicinity of rivers, but this is not a frequent cause of loss. Gram and arhar are more liable to be injured than wheat. The District does not suffer to any marked extent from hail ; hailstorms are much less frequent than in the neighbouring Districts of Saugor and Damoh, and when

they do occur, are generally limited to a small area. White ants, which damage the wheat-plants in dry weather, are also rarely found to do injury in Narsinghpur. Gram and arhar are not infrequently injured by caterpillars in wet weather.

Temperature and Climate.

16. The District has no observatory. The mean maximum and minimum temperatures in the neighbouring District of Hoshangābād are 80° and 52° in January, 108° and 80° in May, and 88° and 75° in July. The maximum temperature recorded in Hoshangābād was 118·5° in 1899. Narsinghpur is probably a little cooler than Hoshangābād. Strong south-westerly winds blow during the hot weather. The monsoon season is moderately cool and the cold weather is very pleasant. Cold easterly winds frequently blow at this time. Night frosts usually occur for about a fortnight in January, and there are heavy falls of dew from November to February.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY AND ARCHÆOLOGY.

HISTORY.

17. Narsinghpur is practically without archæological monuments or inscriptions to throw light on its early history, of which consequently practically nothing is known. It is a natural presumption however that the District was included in the territories of the Haihaya Rājput kings of Chedi, who ruled the Upper Nerbudda Valley from their capital of Tripura or Karanbel, where the village of Tewar now stands near Jubbulpore, from a period shortly after the commencement of the Christian era until the 11th or 12th century. They had an era of their own, commencing from A.D. 249, but for the first five centuries of their rule, there remain only a few isolated facts. From the 9th to the 12th centuries a complete genealogy has been drawn up, containing the names of thirteen kings, and occasional mention of their marriages or wars with the surrounding principalities, the Rāthors of Kanauj, the Chandels of Mahobā and the Ponwārs of Mālwā. From the 12th century nothing more is known of them, and the dynasty probably came to an end at about this period.[1] It has been stated that during the 12th and 13th centuries, the kingdom of Mālwā, then governed by a dynasty belonging to the well-known Pramara or Ponwār Rājput sept, included the western part of the Nerbudda valley.[2] There is however at present no definite evidence forthcoming to show that the Hindu principality of Mālwā included any part of the Nerbudda valley in the Central Provinces, though in later times the Muhammadan province of the same name took in parts of Hoshangābād, Saugor and Damoh. In an

Early History.

[1] Cunningham's Archæological Reports, Vol. IX, p. 78 *seq*.

[2] C. P. Administration Report, 1901-02, Chap. I, p. 8.

inscription found at Udaipur,[1] it is stated that king Vākpati of Mālwā vanquished Yuvarāja, the king of Chedi, slew his generals and raised his sword on high in Tripura. This however can only have been a temporary success, as Yuvarāja belonged to the 10th century, and the Haihaya dynasty continued to reign for at least two centuries longer. It is known also that a Ponwār chief or viceroy was at this time governing the Nāgpur country on behalf of the Mālwā kings.[2] And further that some princes of this line penetrated to Berār and the Godāvari and even to the Carnatic in the pursuit of conquest.[3] It is not improbable, therefore, that parts of the Nerbudda valley belonged to the Ponwār kingdom, though the conjecture is as yet unsupported by evidence.

The Gond Garhā-Mandlā Dynasty.

18. Towards the close of the 15th century, Sangrām Sā, the 47th prince of the Gond-Rājput dynasty of Garhā-Mandlā, hitherto a petty local principality, issued on a career of conquest from the Mandlā highlands and succeeded in adding to his dominions 52 *garhs* or districts comprising Saugor, Damoh and possibly Bhopāl, the Nerbudda valley and parts of the Sātpurā plateau. No description of the history of the dynasty need be given here.[4] But owing to its containing within its limits the castle of Chaurāgarh, Narsinghpur was the scene of several of the most important crises in the fortunes of the Mandlā kings. The construction of the fort of Chaurāgarh is attributed to Sangrām Sā, but no definite evidence is forthcoming in support of the conjecture. In any case it need not be doubted that the acquisition of the Nerbudda valley would have been very

[1] "Epigraphia Indica," Vol. I, Part V (Oct. 1889), p. 227.

[2] From an inscription found in Nāgpur and translated in Journal of the Bombay Asiatic Society, No. VI (Oct. 1843), p. 259.

[3] "Epigraphia Indica," Vol. I, Part V (Oct. 1889), p. 222. Note by Dr. G. Buhler on the Udaipur Prashasti of the kings of Mālwā.

[4] See "Imperial Gazetteer," art. Mandlā, the "Mandlā District Gazetteer," Sleeman's note on the history of the Garhā-Mandlā Rājās in Bengal Asiatic Society's Journal, No. 68, August 1837, and Cunningham's Archæological Reports, Vol. XVII, p. 52.

shortly followed by the provision of a stronghold from which the Mandlā princes could keep watch and ward over this, the richest part of their possessions. Situated on the outer crest of the Sātpurā tableland, and embracing within its circle of defences two hills, Chaurāgarh was less a fort than a large fortified camp. The vast scale of the whole work, its numerous tanks and wells excavated at so unusual an elevation, and the massive debris of its buildings, attest the lavish outlay incurred in its completion, and the importance which was attached to it as a royal stronghold.

The Muhammadan Invasion in Abkar's reign.

19. The first great blow to the Mandlā power took place in 1564 with the invasion of Asaf Khān, the Mughal Viceroy of Karā Mānikpur. The princess Durgāvati, who belonged to the Chandel Rājput clan and was the widow of Sangrām Sā's son, had at this time been governing the kingdom for 15 years with great vigour and success on behalf of her minor son. Durgāvati is the best remembered of all the Mandlā rulers, and stories of her are still current among the people of Jubbulpore and Mandlā. His cupidity excited by the spectacle of these rich and prosperous territories administered only by a woman, and therefore seeming to promise an easy conquest, Asaf Khān invaded the Mandlā kingdom without troubling much for a pretext. The queen met him near the fortress of Singorgarh in Damoh, and, being defeated there, retired to a pass on the road to Mandlā, where, on seeing her troops again give way before the onset of the Mughal forces, she put an end to her own life by plunging a dagger into her breast. Her young son, Bīr Nārāyan, was taken to Chaurāgarh, but was followed by Asaf Khān, who laid siege to the castle and took it by storm. The young prince was trampled to death in the confusion, and the buildings were fired by the women under the fear that they would suffer dishonour if they fell into the enemy's hands. A sister of the queen and the betrothed wife of Bīr Nārāyan are said to have been the only two women who survived and to have been sent to the Emperor Akbar's

harem. It is recorded that Asaf Khān obtained 101 cooking pots full of large and valuable gold coins, besides jewels, gold and silver plate, and images of the gods. Of all this booty, Asaf Khān presented to the king only a small part; and of a thousand elephants which he took, he sent to the king only three hundred indifferent animals and none of the jewels.[1] This invasion is remarkable as having probably opened out the valley for the first time to foreign immigration. Asaf Khān is stated to have held Garhā for some years as an independent principality, and there are various circumstances which indicate an incursion of northern settlers at the same epoch. Sleeman, writing in about 1825, said that 'Local tradition spoke of an intercourse with 'Delhi and a subjection, real or nominal, to its sovereigns 'from Akbar downwards,' but that no mention was ever made of any such connection in the period before Akbar's reign. He added that the oldest rupees found in the earth along the line of the Nerbudda, were of the reign of Akbar, and in support of the theory that the first immigration from the north took place at this period, adduced the history of many of the principal families in the District, which then dated back from 12 to 16 generations. Narsinghpur, however, does not appear to have been ever an integral part of the Mughal Empire, as no part of it is included in the list of provinces (*Sūbah*) and governments (*Sarkār*) given in the Ain-i-Akbarī, though a deed in the possession of the old Kāzī family of Narsinghgarh in Damoh contains the words '*Sarkār Chaurāgarh, Sūbah Mālwā*.' In any case it was soon afterwards restored to the Mandlā kings, Chandar Sā, the next ruler, obtaining the recognition of Akbar to his succession, by the cession of the ten districts which afterwards constituted the principality of Bhopāl. At the same time he seems to have recognised the Mughal Emperor as his overlord, as the two following princes of the Garhā-Mandlā line visited Delhi to pay their respects to him.[2]

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[1] Elliott's History of the Muhammadan Period, Vol. VI, p. 121, and Briggs' Firishta, II, p. 217.

[2] "C. P. Gazetteer," 1870, art. Mandlā.

The Bundelā Invasion.

20. In the reign of Prem Nārāyan, the grandson of Chandar Sā (1599-1610), the Mandlā territories were invaded by Jujhār Singh, the Bundelā Rājā of Orchhā. The real cause of the incursion is said to have been the omission of Prem Nārāyan to pay a ceremonial visit to the Orchhā Rājā on his way down from Delhi, but the story current in local folklore is that it was the result of the indignation of the Hindu Bundelās at the use of the cow for ploughing by the Gonds. Prem Nārāyan took refuge in Chaurāgarh, where he was for months closely besieged. On his death by treachery, the fort fell, and all the other garrisons of Garhā-Mandlā followed its example. Prem Nārāyan still lives in local tradition, and it is related how his headless corpse wielding a magic sword, the gift of the goddess Devī to whom he had offered his head, pursued the Bundelās from Chaurāgarh to the Nerbudda ; and how on another occasion the Bundelās, retreating after a successful foray and having crossed the Nerbudda at Barmhān, said boastfully as they ascended the further bank : 'We have singed his beard well' ; on which, of their own accord, their cannon with teams and drivers rolled back down the bank into the Nerbudda and were lost ; after which the Bundelās came no more south of the Nerbudda. Prem Nārāyan's head and body are supposed to have been turned into stone after he had cut off his head and offered it to the goddess, so that she might grant him victory, and the stones are pointed out, that representing the head being in the fort, and the body at the foot of the hill.[1] Prem Nārāyan's successor, Hirde Sā, repulsed the Bundelās and re-established his power by the aid of the Muhammadan chief of Bhopāl, to obtain which, however, he had to cede territory containing 300 villages. From this time the fortunes of the Mandlā kingdom gradually declined, until in 1781, the last scene of their history again took place in Chaurāgarh, Narhar Sā, the last king, seeking refuge here when pressed by the Marāthā Sūbah of Saugor. The Gond prince was betrayed and ended his days in impri-

[1] Mr. (Sir C.) Grant's Settlement Report of 1866, p. 32, foot-note.

sonment at Khurai, while his dominions fell into the hands of his conquerors.

Narsinghpur under the Gonds.

21. Little information remains as to the condition of Narsinghpur or Garhā Dakhantīr, as it was then called, under the Gond princes. The few scattered ruins remaining are inferior in age and importance to Chaurāgarh. Sleeman, it is true, wrote of 'Traces of three great cities, 'showing the remains of from 20 to 50 large tanks, and each 'yielding to a considerable depth below the surface, the 'finest hewn stone.' But no scientific inquiry was made regarding these relics, nor is their site known at present, and they may probably be attributed to the early Hindu civilisation preceding the Gonds. The Gond system of government appears to have been almost exclusively feudal, and the greater part of the country was in the hands of chiefs who furnished little or no revenue. The tracts held directly by the ruling power through Hindu and Muhammadan governors and agents must have been few and insignificant, for the investigations into revenue-free tenures at the early settlements rarely brought to light instances of assignments made through government officers, while grants conferred by chiefs and nobles were common. And from the habits of the Gond chiefs, as noticed by Sleeman, even so late as the cession, when they had been 30 years or more under foreign dominion and had been familiarised with foreign ideas by three centuries of intercourse with northern immigrants, it would appear that nothing but inevitable necessity had driven them, to an agricultural life. At the 30 years' settlement (1864), many claims to proprietary right were based on the fact that the land had been cleared by an immediate ancestor of the petitioner and cultivated spots were commonly pointed out as having been infested by tigers within the last half century. Under rulers, who were ignorant of luxury and even fled from comfort, who regarded hunting as the natural occupation of men and cultivation as an unseemly encroachment on their hunting grounds, lived a people whose first virtue was

blind fidelity, and whose tastes were better ministered to by a roaming license to forage in the woods and hills, than by the richest food earned by labour. It seems wonderful that a principality so constituted and supported should have so long withstood encroachments from without.[1]

Period of Marāthā rule.

22. With the deposition of Narhar Sā, Narsinghpur passed under the rule of the Marāthā Pandits of Saugor. Their administration lasted only for 15 years and is little remarkable except as having made way for a considerable influx of Hindu immigrants from the north. They were in turn expelled by the powerful Bhonsla rulers of Nāgpur. In 1785 the Rājā Mudhojī obtained the cession of Mandlā and the upper Nerbudda valley from the Poona Court in return for a payment of Rs. 27 lakhs, and during the two following years he acquired Hoshangābād and the greater part of Saugor and Damoh, taking possession of the forts of Chaurāgarh, Tejgarh, Mandlā and Dhāmoni. Hoshangābād being defenceless was now periodically plundered by the Pindāris and the Nawāb of Bhopāl, and the distress thus occasioned amounted in 1803 and 1804 to actual famine, and forced a number of people into the more secure and prosperous District of Narsinghpur. Between 1807 and 1810 similar accessions were received from Bhopāl which had been ravaged by Amīr Khān and the Pindāris. Thus largely recruited and possessing a ready market for its produce in the consumption of the troops, Narsinghpur attained, in Sleeman's words, 'A state of cultivation and prosperity which it had never before known.' But this gleam of good fortune was of short duration. In 1807 the Narsinghpur and Hoshangābād Districts were made over to the Marāthā governor, Nawāb Sādik Alī Khān, for the support of the frontier force.

[1] The above vivid description is taken from Mr. (Sir C.) Grant's Settlement Report of 1866. But though he must have had the best means of estimating the nature of Gond government in Narsinghpur and his description cannot now be questioned, it would by no means hold good of the Gonds generally. Mandlā and Chānda are stated to have attained under Gond rule a degree of prosperity and affluence which they have never since recovered.

But as the military expenses amounted in all to about ten lakhs of rupees, while the joint revenue of the two Districts was only seven lakhs, it was arranged that the balance of three lakhs should be remitted annually from Nāgpur. For two or three years the remittances arrived regularly, but the supplies from headquarters then began to fail, and at this inopportune moment, Amīr Khān Pindāri, the Nawāb of Tonk, invaded the District. He was repulsed, and his defeat was followed up by the invasion of Bhopāl. But in these campaigns Sādik Alī Khān incurred expenses which could only be met by increased taxation, and the smaller jāgīrdārs took the combined opportunity afforded by their pressing wants and by his absence to give full vent to their natural rapacity. When extortion by main force failed, other devices were not wanting. Patels were tempted by titles and dresses of honour to bid against each other, and were alternately coaxed and squeezed until they had nothing left to make them worth attention. The law itself was made the instrument of illegal exaction from merchants and others not ostensibly connected with land. Courts of justice were created, whose sole staff consisted of a guard of soldiers and a few ready witnesses. The only crime of which cognisance was taken was adultery, and procedure was simplified by throwing the burden of proof on the accused, who was of course a rich man. But although the later years of Marāthā rule were thus characterised by a system of rack-renting, restricted only by the limits to opportunity, it must be remembered that the concentration of troops and the consequently heavy disbursements in the District, went far to counteract the exhaustion which would otherwise have resulted. And the Marāthās knew also how to chequer and diversify their despotism by titles, honours and shows to an almost unprecedented extent. When on the commencement of British rule the attempt was made to work up to the annual revenue nominally demanded under Marāthā administration, and at the same time the removal of the garrison took with it the ready market for produce, it is not surprising that the first years of our revenue

management resulted in a disastrous failure. Narsinghpur shared to the full the misfortunes entailed on this part of the country by the depredations of the notorious classes of robbers, who flourished at the beginning of the century, the Pindāris and the Thags. Of the three principal Pindāri leaders of the Sindhia Shāhi,[1] two had possessions in the Narsinghpur District. Chītu, perhaps the best known of the Pindāri chiefs and a commander of 5000 horsemen, held Bārha in jāgīr, and Karīm Khān, a commander of more than 1000 horse, had at one time lands in Palohā. In 1831, when Captain Sleeman was engaged in the suppression of the Thags and had learnt much of their history from the confessions of pardoned accomplices, he discovered that while he had been administering the District in 1824, a gang of them had lived not 400 yards from his court-house, and that the groves of Mandesar, some twelve miles from Narsinghpur, had been one of the greatest 'beles' or places of slaughter in all India.

Actions fought by British troops in 1817-18.

23. The commencement of British rule dates from 1818. In November 1817, on the first intelligence of the commotions at Nāgpur, and the treachery of the Rājā Appa Sāhib, Brigadier-General Hardyman, who was commanding one of the numerous detached forces assembled on the confines of Central India for the destruction of the Pindāris, was directed by Lord Hastings to advance his force from the frontier of Rewah in the direction of Nāgpur. On arrival at Jubbulpore he engaged and defeated a considerable body of Nāgpur troops. Shortly afterwards he was apprised of the successful issue of the battle of Sītābaldī on the 27th November, and was recommended to take up a position between Jubbulpore and Narsinghpur[2] in order to intercept fugitives from Nāgpur. Additions were accordingly sent to a force already stationed at Gādarwāra

[1] The bulk of the Pindāris were divided into two groups, the Sindhia Shāhi and Holkar Shāhi, according as they nominally professed adherence to Sindhia or Holkar.

[2] Or Chhotā Gādarwāra as it was then called.

under Colonel Macmorine, who then proceeded to attack Srīnagar. This place had a garrison of 3000 foot and 4000 horse with 10 guns according to the information received, but the number of guns was subsequently found to be only five, and the strength of the force was also probably exaggerated. The British troops consisted of a battalion and a half of infantry, with a squadron of cavalry, some irregular light horse and four guns. Advancing on the morning of the 5th December in two columns with the guns in the centre and the cavalry on the left, Colonel Macmorine found the enemy drawn up to oppose his progress, their left resting on the fort inside and round which the guns were placed, and their cavalry on the right The British cavalry turned the right of the position, and on this the enemy's infantry broke and fled with the loss of about 100, the British losing 12 killed and wounded. Chaurāgarh still continued to hold out. The Killedār Khande Rao at first made a demonstration of surrender, and requested a little time for the payment of the arrears of the garrison. This soon turned out to be a mere ruse to gain time, and the Killedār finally stated that though the fort had been formally ceded to the British, yet the Rājā had only given his consent to its surrender under compulsion, and had since despatched counter-orders to the garrison on which he meant to act. This was a serious difficulty in the way of Colonel Macmorine's small force. The approach to the fort was naturally difficult, and was defended by a stockade commanded by a low hill, on which were several guns in position. These outer defences were manned by the armed retainers of the Gond chiefs of Harrai, Dilehrī, Chīchli and Pitehrā to the number of 2500 men. The fort itself appeared to the attacking force to stand on an almost perpendicular rock, which was not commanded by any adjacent hill or height. It was reported to mount 20 guns and to be garrisoned by 1200 regular troops, well supplied with provisions. The siege would probably have been a long one had not the resolution of the Killedār been shaken by the advance of the left division of the army under Brigadier-General Watson

after the reduction of Mandlā. Chiefly, it was supposed, on this account, the fort was evacuated on the night of the 12th May 1818, and occupied by a British detachment under Lieut. Montgomerie on the 13th May. A month or two later Appa Sāhib, the fugitive Rājā of Nāgpur, temporarily occupied the fort with a party of Gonds, but this was the last occasion on which it attained any historical prominence.

Cession of the District.

24. Narsinghpur became British territory under the agreement made after the battle of Sītābaldī in 1817, which was subsequently confirmed by the treaty of 1826. The unfortunate mistakes of our early revenue administration, which for some years prevented the recovery of the District from the effects of the lawless robbery and oppression to which it had been subjected, may more properly be noticed in the chapter on land revenue. In 1825, the trans-Nerbudda parganas of Chānwarpātha and Tendūkhedā, forming two of the Panch Mahāls of Deorī, were placed under our management by Sindhia in part payment for the Gwalior Contingent and attached to the Narsinghpur District. They were subsequently ceded in full sovereignty by the treaty of 1860. This tract had fared under Sindhia's government far worse than the District south of the Nerbudda under our rule, and the ostensible reason for its being placed under our management was that it was depopulated and required to be restored to prosperity. In 1823 the oppressed cultivators, rackrented beyond endurance, came over and sought Captain Sleeman's assistance in a body. Our first settlements afforded the people immediate relief, and they subsequently shared in the benefits conferred by the lenient assessment made at the twenty years' settlement (1835), under which the whole District rapidly regained its prosperity; yet singularly enough the landholders of Chānwarpātha, as will be seen below, showed a far more strenuous opposition to our authority in the disturbances of 1842 than their neighbours south of the Nerbudda, who had much less reason for gratitude to us. In 1836, under a plan drawn up for the diminution of the number of Districts into which the province was divided,

Narsinghpur was abolished as a separate charge, and annexed to the neighbouring District of Hoshangābād. This measure proved however to be of doubtful expediency and was reversed after 1843.

The Bundelā rising of 1842.

25. In 1842 occurred what is known as the Bundelā rising. It originated in the Saugor District and was caused by the discontent of the people at the jurisdiction of the new civil courts. Two Bundelā landholders in the Saugor District resisted execution, killed some of the police and burnt and plundered several towns. The rising excited little sympathy south of the river, but the trans-Nerbudda portions of the District entered into it heart and soul, though they could not have had very pleasant recollections of their old rulers. The Deputy Commissioner of Narsinghpur wrote that not a single landholder in the Chānwarpātha pargana was quite free from the taint of complicity in the insurrection. Delan Shā, the Gond chief of Madanpur, was the principal insurgent in the District; he rose and plundered Deorī and the surrounding territory in Saugor and the Chānwarpātha tract of Narsinghpur. Captain Wakeman, the commander of a detachment of British troops which was operating against the rebels, related that he found the whole valley north of the Nerbudda in league with the insurgents with the one exception of the Dīwān of Bamhnī. Their force was freely supplied with provisions, while the British detachment was obliged to obtain supplies from Narsinghpur. The very man selected by the District authorities as a guide to our troops was more than suspected of being an active spy for and a zealous partisan of the enemy. Not only did he in every way retard and mislead Captain Wakeman's movements, but there was reason to suppose that he was the prime agent in a night attack upon our detachment. The insurrection also broke out hotly in the Hīrāpur tāluka, then attached to Jubbulpore, but subsequently transferred to the Narsinghpur District. But south of the river with the exception of one or two petty Gond chiefs living on the border of the hill

country, not a landholder showed symptoms of disaffection. When pressed by our troops the rebels crossed the Nerbudda, and made for Bachai, plundering one or two rich villages on their way. Thence they went through the estate of the Gond Rājā of Dilehrī, and below Chaurāgarh to Murgīdhāna, a village belonging to one of the Fatehpur Rājās. Here they were attacked by a party of matchlockmen under the naib-tahsīldār of Chānwārpātha, and driven to recross the Nerbudda, burning the town of Sainkhedā on their way. They were disappointed in their hope of receiving the same aid from the chiefs south of the Nerbudda, as had been so willingly afforded them by the landholders of Chānwarpātha, but the very fact that a mere rabble only formidable from the celerity of its movements, should have made a complete circuit of the District in broad daylight without hindrance, showed that if the people were not against us they were certainly not altogether with us. Some of the chiefs however redeemed their character for loyalty in 1843, by capturing the leaders in a second small outbreak which followed the larger one. The insurrection seemed to come quite by surprise on the local authorities. Nor need this be considered as unaccountable, as no tangible ground of complaint was ever alleged by the Chānwarpātha insurgents, and the body of the District escaped the contagion altogether. It is possible that so far as the Narsinghpur District was concerned, the disturbances were not entirely due to local mismanagement, but this is not a matter which need now be discussed. It may be remembered that the rising took place immediately after the disastrous Afghān war of 1839. The result to the Province was a complete reorganisation. The suppressed Districts were reconstituted, and the administrative staff replaced by an entirely new body of officers, the Saugor and Nerbudda territories being separated from the North-Western Provinces and constituted the charge of an Agent to the Governor-General by Lord Ellenborough. This last arrangement was not found to work well, however, and the territories were again attached to the North-Western Provinces in 1852, remaining a part of them until the formation of the Central Provinces in 1861.

26. Fifteen years later broke out the great Mutiny of 1857. The District was then garrisoned by four companies of the 28th Madras Native Infantry. The Deputy Commissioner of the District was Captain Ternan. The following account of the incidents connected with the Mutiny in which this officer was concerned is taken from Malleson's Indian Mutiny, but it may be mentioned that Grant's Settlement Report omits all notice of them, though it describes the occurrences in Narsinghpur during the Mutiny. It is possible, therefore, that Colonel Malleson's narrative is somewhat biassed in favour of Captain Ternan, though no doubt need be entertained as to the energy and capacity displayed by that officer. As the quotation which follows is taken from the standard work on the Indian Mutiny, no justification is needed for its inclusion on account of its intrinsic interest :—

The Mutiny.

27. 'It happened on an evening in February 1857 that 'Captain Ternan was sitting smoking outside his tent, when the kotwāl 'of the village came running to him, 'having in his hands some small *chapātis* or cakes of unleavened bread. On reaching Ternan, the kotwāl, out of 'his breath and panting, stated that the cakes were the 'remnant of a large quantity he had received that morning, 'with instructions to leave them with the watchman of every 'village, to be kept till called for ; that he had so distributed them in the neighbouring villages, and that those which 'he held in his hand constituted the surplus. "What," he 'asked Ternan, "was he to do with them." Ternan naturally shrewd, and that natural shrewdness sharpened by the 'experience of the rebellion of 1842-43, at once divined the 'truth. In those small unleavened cakes he saw the fiery 'cross sent through the land to unsettle the minds of the 'great mass of the people ; that, distributed broadcast as 'the kotwāl had distributed them in his District, they would 'indicate a sudden danger which might come at any moment

The Chapātis.

'upon the people, threatening their caste and undermining 'their religion. He at once embodied these ideas in a report, 'which he transmitted forthwith to his official superior, 'Major Erskine (Commissioner of Jubbulpore). Major 'Erskine was an officer who had written a book of "Forms 'and Tables for the use of the Bengal Native Infantry." 'That book was a reflex of his mind. His mind was a 'mind "of forms and tables." His mental vision com- 'manded the line of strict and formal routine. Out of that 'line he saw nothing, he was incapable of seeing anything. 'When therefore he received Ternan's report and read the 'conclusions drawn by that officer regarding the unleavened 'cakes, he ridiculed them; he considered the idea far-fetched, 'absurd, impossible. He wrote back to Ternan to that 'effect, adding that it was simply "a case of a dyer's vat" 'having gone wrong, and that the owner of the vat was 'propitiating the gods by the distribution of cakes. Subse- 'quent events made it abundantly evident that Erskine was 'wrong and Ternan was right. Distributed broadly over 'the North-Western Provinces and in Oudh in the earlier 'months of 1857, these cakes were the harbingers of the 'coming storm. It is certain now that they originated in 'the brain of the Oudh conspirators, of the men made 'conspirators by the annexation of their country, and they 'were sent to every village for the very object divined by 'Ternan—the object of unsettling men's minds, of preparing 'them for the unforeseen, of making them impressionable, 'easy to receive the ideas the conspirators wished to 'promulgate.

The Rājā of Dilehrī.

28. 'I may record here a decision of the Government 'issued in the same District a year or 'two prior to 1857, and of the remark- 'able consequence it produced after 'the Mutiny had broken out, as illustrative of the influence 'which an able and conscientious English officer can almost 'always bring to bear upon native chiefs. One of the most 'influential chieftains in the territories under Captain 'Ternan's supervision was the Rājā of Dilehrī, the feudal

'lord of all the Gond clans[1] (*sic*). This chief had ever been 'loyal. For his fidelity and good conduct in the trying 'times of 1842-43, the Government had presented him with a 'gold medal. Like many of the Gond tribe, he had been 'somewhat too profuse in his expenditure and had incurred 'debts. But by exercising a strict economy he had paid off 'those debts. Such was his condition in 1853, shortly after 'the Saugor and Nerbudda territories had been brought 'under the Government of the North-Western Provinces. 'It had been a principle of that Government since the 'time when it was administered by Mr. Thomason to 'discourage large landholders. One morning in that 'year Captain Ternan received instructions emanating from 'Agra, desiring him to inform the Rājā of Dilehrī that, 'inasmuch as he was unfit to hold the title of Rājā and had 'proved himself incapable of managing his estates, he was 'deprived of both ; that his title of Rājā was abolished and 'that his property would be distributed among his tenants, 'he receiving a percentage from the rents. When this 'decision was unwillingly announced to the Rājā by Captain 'Ternan, the old man drew his medal from the belt in which 'it was habitually carried, and requested the English officer 'to return it to those who had bestowed it, as they were 'now about to disgrace him before his clan and before the 'whole District. With great difficulty Ternan pacified 'him. It was generally expected that he would break out 'into rebellion. He might well have done so, for every 'member of the clan felt insulted in his person. Ternan, 'fearing an outbreak, pressed on the Government the 'mistake they had committed and urged them to rectify it. 'But the Government would not listen. The order was 'carried out. Ternan did all in his power to save the family 'from ruin, but even he could do little. Before the Mutiny 'broke out in May 1857, the old man had died ; his son too 'had died. The next heir took the title, for, however the 'Government might order, the representative of the family

[1] This statement is incorrect, as he was only one of several petty chiefs in the District and unknown outside it.

'was always Rājā to the people. Then came the Mutiny of 'May 1857. The Narsinghpur District felt its shock. 'Muhammadans from across the border invaded the District 'and pillaged the villages. The outlook became every day 'more gloomy. "Save yourself while there is yet time," 'said the loyal officials to Ternan. But Ternan stayed. 'One morning, however, early in June, his house was 'surrounded by a considerable body of armed men with 'lighted matchlocks. Ternan saw at a glance that they all 'belonged to the Dilehrī clan. He at once summoned the 'chief and asked him what had brought him and his clans-'men in such numbers and in so warlike a garb. The chief 'replied that he would answer if he and the other chiefs 'were allowed a private audience with their interlocutor. 'Ternan admitted them into his drawing room. The chief 'replied: "You behaved kindly to us and fought our battle 'when the title and estate were confiscated and you were 'abused for so doing. Now we hear disturbances are rife, 'and we come to offer you our services. We will stick by 'you as you stuck by us. What do you wish us to do?" 'Ternan thanked them, accepted their offer, assured them they 'should be no losers by their conduct, and promised to do 'his utmost to see justice done them. The members of 'the clan remained loyal throughout the trying events of '1857-58, resisted the urgent solicitations made to them to 'join the rebels, and what was of equal importance, they 'induced other clans to unite with them in rendering most 'valuable service to the British cause.' The extract given above was referred to the District office to ascertain if any facts bearing on Colonel Malleson's somewhat improbable statements could be elicited, and the following report has been received:—The old Rājā of Dilehrī, who was known as the Senāpatī, died in November 1855. The estate had been granted to him, revenue-free for the term of his life as a reward for his conduct in 1842-43, with the option to Government of resuming the grant at his death. When this occurred, Major Erskine, the Commissioner, reported the case for the orders of the North-Western Provinces Government,

and it was decided that the grant should be resumed, the estate assessed to revenue, and that the heir should not be allowed to assume the title of Rājā. The action of Government was therefore perfectly legitimate and there was no question of confiscation. How Colonel Malleson obtained his information it is impossible to surmise, but it is clear that the vivid and pathetic picture of the proud old chief proffering his medal to the Deputy Commissioner and asking that it might be returned to those who had given it had no foundation in fact, as he was dead when the orders were received. It is doubtful also whether Captain Ternan was Deputy Commissioner of the District at this time.

Occurrences during the Mutiny.

29. The body of the District remained undisturbed during the Mutiny, partly perhaps because the people remembered the ignominious end of the rising of 1842-43 and partly because the prosperity prevailing since the settlement of 1835 had produced a feeling of satisfaction with the existing state of things. Chānwarpātha and Hīrāpur were again the theatre of an outbreak, but this time the mass of the agricultural population kept aloof from it, and the rebels were mostly from other Districts. Only three resident landholders of any influence, the Rājā of Hīrāpur and the Gond chiefs of Madanpur and Dhilwar, whose states were in the hilly tract adjoining the Bhopāl frontier, took any active share in the movement. All three of them had been leaders in the disturbances of 1842 and had only owed their escape from condign punishment to the mercy of the Government. They had asked for their own lives and a provision for their children, and had been granted a full pardon and reinstatement in their former lands and dignities. It is a striking example of a problem often met with in Indian history, that while these chiefs, who should have been bound to us by every tie of gratitude, should have been the first to revolt, one of our warmest supporters was Nizām Shā, the brother of the Madanpur Dīwān, who had just completed a long term

of imprisonment in the Narsinghpur jail.[1] The Saugor and Bhopāl mutineers entered the Chānwarpātha tract in August 1857 and plundered the town and police Station-house of Tendūkhedā. In October a second raid was made by Nawāb Alī Khān of Bhopāl with 500 matchlockmen, 150 Pathāns from Rāhatgarh and some of the Saugor rebels. They again plundered and burnt Tendūkhedā and Belkherī and committed other depredations. At the same time Meherbān Singh, a noted rebel leader, moved down to Hīrāpur on the north of the Nerbudda about 15 miles from Narsinghpur, and threatened the station. The rebels of the Bargī pargana of Jubbulpore also made demonstrations against the south-eastern tracts. Captain Ternan with some police accompanied by two weak companies of the 28th and two six-pounder guns under Captain Woolley marched to Sānkal opposite Hīrāpur to oppose Meherbān Singh, who occupied a small fort commanding the village. He was speedily put to flight and on hearing of this the rebels at Tendūkhedā also retired. Meherbān Singh returned in November and crossing the Nerbudda burnt Sānkal on the south side of the river, but was again attacked and his force dispersed. In the meantime Captain Ternan and Captain Woolley were patrolling the Saugor road in cooperation with detachments from Saugor, and were most successful in clearing that part of the country of rebels. In a hand-to-hand encounter with the largest body of them Ganjan Singh, a rebel landholder of considerable consequence, was killed with most of his followers. Ternan, who had his horse shot under him in this encounter, then urged a rapid march upon Singhpur, a place held by a noted rebel called Dalganjan. His advice was followed and this man was taken and hanged. In January 1858 about 4,000 rebels from Rāhatgarh and Bhopāl, including 250 Pathān horse, in conjunction with Delan Shā of Madanpur and Narwar Singh and others of the Narsinghpur mutineers attacked Tendūkhedā. They were

[1] His loyalty, however, was in great measure attributable to family dissensions. He reaped his reward in the grant to him of the Madanpur and Dhilwar estates.

stubbornly resisted by the police and Rao Sūrat Singh Lodhī of Imjhirā with some matchlockmen and Nizām Shā of Madanpur. Tendūkhedā fell after a spirited defence, and the rebels then proceeded to Imjhirā, where a gallant stand was made by Sūrat Singh, the defenders being said to have lost 60 men in killed alone. The village was taken and burnt, but the loss of the insurgents was so considerable that their success was little better than a check. On receipt of the news Captain Ternan, who was engaged in patrolling the District, advanced with a force of two companies of the 28th, two guns and two troops of the 2nd Hyderābād Cavalry which had been sent to his assistance some time before. The troops patrolling the Saugor road acted in cooperation and the rebels fled up the hills towards Rāhatgarh. The cavalry made a long night march and dashing into the mutinous village of Madanpur, before anyone there was well awake, surprised it, captured some rebels, among whom were a son and grandson of Delan Shā the Dīwān of Madanpur who had rebelled both in 1842 and 1857, and killed others. By this vigorous stroke the Narsinghpur District was finally cleared of all rebels of consequence. Delan Shā, who had been long hiding in the jungles, was captured in May 1858 and hanged.

ARCHÆOLOGY.

Archæology.[1]

30. The District has few remains of interest. Barehtā, 14 miles south-east of Narsinghpur, contained a collection of fragments of statuary, most of which have now been removed to Narsinghpur and placed in the public gardens and subsequently in the town hall. They consist of pillars, doorways, beams and figures. Other sculptures are believed to have been taken to Europe and very little remains at Barehtā itself. Some statues left there appear to be images of Jain Tīrthankars. Barmhān, at the junction of the Nerbudda and Warāhi rivers, is an important place of

[1] See also Gazetteer articles on Narsinghpur, Barehtā, Barmhān and Chaurāgarh.

pilgrimage and contains a number of temples and some fine flights of stone steps leading up from the river. An important religious fair is held here in January. Chaurāgarh about 20 miles to the south-west of Narsinghpur, contains the ruins of the large fortified camp constructed by the Gonds and many remains of buildings inside. The place is very seldom visited. At Dhilwar and Chānwarpātha are the remains of Gond forts.

CHAPTER III.

POPULATION.

STATISTICS OF POPULATION.

Statistics of area and population, density, towns and villages.

31. The area and population of the District in 1901 were 1,916 square miles and 313,951 persons respectively. In 1902, tracts of 34 and 15 square miles of Government forest were transferred to Narsinghpur from Saugor and Damoh, and 11 villages, with an area of 15 square miles and a population of 1,567 persons, to Narsinghpur from Saugor. Four square miles of Government forest were transferred to Saugor from Narsinghpur. Narsinghpur thus acquired a strip of territory to the north of the Nerbudda which formerly separated the tracts of Chānwarpātha and Hīrāpur. The principal village transferred was Pitehrā, the headquarters of a considerable Gond estate. The revised totals of area and population are 1,976 square miles and 315,518 persons. Narsinghpur is the smallest District in the Central Provinces[1] in area and the smallest but two in population. The District is divided into two tahsīls, Narsinghpur lying east and Gādarwāra west. Up to 1876 the small tract north of the Nerbudda constituted a third tahsīl with its headquarters at Chānwarpātha. The Chānwarpātha tahsīl was however admittedly far too small, its only *raison d'être* being the difficulty of communication between villages north and south of the Nerbudda in the rains. In that year the Chānwarpātha tahsīl was abolished and its villages divided between the Narsinghpur and Gādarwāra tahsīls, those lying west of the Saugor-Karelī road being given to Gādarwāra and those east to Narsinghpur. This arrangement has worked satis-

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[1] Excluding Berār.

factorily. During the open season communication with the trans-Nerbudda portion of the District is easy by means of the first-class road from Saugor to Karelī, a temporary bridge being constructed across the Nerbudda. Another road has recently been made from Tendūkhedā to Barmhān on the Nerbudda. During the rains the villages north of the Nerbudda are isolated and traffic is almost entirely suspended, but this is true of almost the whole District, for in the rainy season it is impossible to move carts except along the few metalled roads. An Honorary Magistrate exercising 3rd class powers has his court at Tendūkhedā. The area of the Narsinghpur tahsīl is 1,106 square miles and its population 150,305 persons, the corresponding figures for Gādarwāra being 870 square miles and 165,213 persons respectively. Of the two tahsīls Narsinghpur is larger in area and Gādarwāra in population. The area of the tracts north of the Nerbudda, formerly constituting the Chānwarpātha tahsīl, was 269 square miles and its population in 1872, 52,000 persons or rather less than a sixth of that of the District. Adding the tract recently transferred, the area north of the Nerbudda would be 329 square miles. The total density of population is 160 persons per square mile, and the rural density excluding the three towns 148. Gādarwāra is more thickly populated than Narsinghpur, their respective figures of density being 190 and 136. The most thickly populated portion of the District is the Gādarwāra Station-house area with 239 persons to the square mile; the figures of the other Station-houses, excluding Government forest, being Narsinghpur 216, Barmhān 194, Tendūkhedā 188, Chhindwāra 178, Chīchli 141, and Belkhedī 114. The gross cropped area gives nearly 2 acres per person of the population which is a very high average. Districts which grow little rice are always more sparsely populated than those where rice is a staple crop, but considering the large proportion of very fertile land in Narsinghpur, the population would appear to be far from the point where it can begin to press on the means of subsistence. During the decade ending 1901, the decrease in population ($14\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.)

was considerably larger than that in the cropping (6 per cent.) and in this respect the District has considerable leeway to make up on its position in 1891. The District contains 3 towns and 974 inhabited villages according to the census tables. The village lists give 1,127 towns and villages, of which 990 are inhabited and 137 uninhabited.[1] 17 of these villages contain less than 10 persons. There are 10 forest villages. Villages are large in Narsinghpur, the average population being 327 or more than 70 houses. 239 villages contain less than 100 persons and 463 less than 200 according to the census tables. The District contained three towns in 1901, Narsinghpur (11,233), Gādarwāra (8,198) and Chhindwāra (4,216), Chhindwāra being classed as a town on account of its being a municipality. The urban population was 23,600 persons or 7½ per cent. of the total in 1901, and increased from 19,000 in 1891 in spite of the decrease in the population of the District. Besides the towns the following nine villages contained over 2,000 persons in 1901 :—Karelī (4,022), Kaudiyā (2,474), Amgaon Kalān (2,463), Palohā (2,344), Sainkhedā (2,259), Singhpur (2,219), Barhā (2,170), Bagāspur (2,077) and Tendūkhedā (2,071). 30 villages had a population of more than 1,000 persons.

Variation in population.

32. A census of the District has now been taken on five occasions, in 1866, 1872, 1881, 1891 and 1901. In 1866 the population was 337,000 persons. In 1872 it had increased to 339,000 persons. Narsinghpur was not severely affected by the famine of 1869 and there are some grounds for supposing that the census of 1872 was inaccurate and that the population was understated. In 1881 the population was 365,000, being an increase of 26,000 or nearly 8 per cent. on 1872. The increase of population was lower at the census than in any District except Saugor. The year 1876 was a very unhealthy one, the death-rate being over 45 per mille. The increase disclosed by the excess of births over deaths was only 4·5 per mille, but there is nothing to show that the population had gained

[1] Including 11 villages transferred from Saugor in 1902.

considerably by immigration. In 1891 the population was 367,000, giving an increase of 2,000 persons or only ½ per cent. on 1881. This increase was the lowest in the Province. The last years of the decade had been unhealthy. The number of deaths exceeded that of births in each of the 6 years 1886-91, except 1888. In 1887 and 1890 there were severe epidemics of cholera. The increase disclosed by vital statistics was 2·3 per cent., this being also the lowest figure in the Province. There was slight emigration during the decade to Bhopāl and the adjoining Sātpurā Districts, but it seems a certain deduction from the figures that some amount of distress must have been present. The harvests appear to have been poor in one or two years, and were probably worse than was realised at the time. The average birth-rate during the decade 1881-90 was 41 per mille, and the death-rate 39 per mille or the highest in the Province. The population of the Narsinghpur tahsīl actually decreased by 1·4 per cent., while that of Gādarwāra rose by 2·3 per cent. In 1901 the population was 314,000 persons, showing a decrease of 53,000 persons or 14½ per cent. since 1891. The decrease of population was nearly equally distributed between the two tahsīls, Narsinghpur losing by 14 and Gādarwāra by 15 per cent. The number of deaths exceeded that of births in 1891, and 1894-97 inclusive. In 1898 and 1900 there were slightly more births than deaths. In 1895 and 1896 the death-rate was about double the birth-rate, and in 1897 nearly quadruple. There were epidemics of cholera in 1891, 1895 and 1897. The registered excess of deaths over births was nearly 35,000 during the decade, while the census disclosed a decrease of population larger by 18,000 than this figure. The difference was about the same as the average for British Districts and may be attributed to deficient reporting of deaths during the famine years. The District was distressed in 1894 and 1895 and severely distressed in 1896 and 1897. In the famine of 1900 it escaped more lightly. During the decade 1891-1900 the average annual birth-rate was 33 per mille or the fifth from lowest, and

the death-rate 43·5 per mille or the fifth highest among the Districts of the Province.

Absence of growth of population.

33. In 1901 the population was thus 23,000 less than in 1866, and the review just given of the successive enumerations has shown that even under normal circumstances the tendency to increase is very small. Mr. (Sir C.) Grant in his Settlement Report emphasises continually the abounding prosperity of the people in his time. The land was even at that period closely cultivated and no very substantial expansion of tillage has either occurred since or seems feasible in the future. On the other hand, the prices of agricultural produce have risen largely, while at the settlement of 1893-94 the revenue was raised by 50 per cent. and, in spite of the subsequent famines, the District has been able to pay the revised revenue and no permanent abatements have been made. Mr. De Brett expressed the opinion in his Settlement Report that the population in 1891 was as much as the cultivation of the District could support; the cropped area per head of population being then 1·8 acres, which he considered a very high rate for a District which did not grow rice to any considerable extent, and where irrigation (and manure) were practically never used. At present (1904) the cropped area averages 2 acres per head of population, which certainly seems by no means a meagre allowance for so fertile a District. The local methods of agriculture are generally allowed to be backward and to be far from obtaining the best possible return from the soil. But the reason generally assigned is that the cultivator has been able by his simple methods to obtain a quantity of produce sufficient to keep himself in comfort, and in the absence of any pressure of population on the land has had no inducement to improve them. The statistics of population, on the other hand, do not indicate even that normal increase which it is reasonable to expect in any area where the people have enough to live on, and where the prudential checks arising from a high standard of comfort have not begun to operate. And there seems, therefore,

no ground for supposing that the growth of population is likely to be a factor of any importance in the improvement of agriculture.

Migration.

34. No considerable migration takes place to or from the District. In 1901 nearly 92 per cent. of the inhabitants were shown as having been born in Narsinghpur, this being the highest proportion returned by any District in the Jubbulpore or Nerbudda Divisions except Betūl. A total of 31,600 persons born in Narsinghpur were enumerated in other Districts or Provinces, only 6300 of these having gone beyond the Central Provinces. Migration takes place from and to Jubbulpore, Saugor, Seonī, Hoshangābād and Chhindwāra, but not to any greater extent than can be accounted for by marriages and the chance movements of tenants and labourers.

Diseases.

35. The climate of the District is fairly healthy, though the rainfall is heavy, and the water-supply is obtained mainly from wells. Cholera has not been severe, the number of deaths having exceeded 1000 in only 8 years between 1872 and 1903. Five of these were between 1890 and 1897 when cholera was the usual concomitant of distress. The worst epidemic was in 1876 when 4000 deaths were recorded, being equivalent to a rate of over 12 per mille. From 1897 to 1903 cholera was absent. Small-pox has always been present but rarely in epidemic form. In 1874-75 a severe epidemic occurred, the number of deaths being nearly 2000 in 1874 and 5800 in 1875, and the equivalent rates of mortality 6 and 17 respectively per mille per annum. In 1881-83 there was a slighter epidemic, and these three years and 1879 were the only ones in which more than a hundred deaths have been recorded from this disease. Deaths from fever account, as usual in the Central Provinces, for half or two-thirds of the total number reported, but fever includes lung and other diseases. The mortality from liver complaints is severe in the rainy season and after its close, and in 1903 the Civil Surgeon reported that bowel

disease was a common sequela of measles. An epidemic of plague broke out in 1903 and spread over the District in that year and in 1904, disappearing towards the close of 1904. The disease appeared in 156 towns and villages and 6821 deaths were recorded in all. As in Saugor and Damoh, several cases of incurable paralysis resulted from the consumption of *tiurā* (*Lathyrus sativus*) during the famines. Leprosy is very rare in Narsinghpur as the lower classes generally live in a more cleanly and comfortable fashion than in the south and east of the Province. Blindness, on the other hand, as usual in the Northern Districts, is prevalent, the census of 1901 showing 17 blind males and 32 females in 10,000 of each sex as against the Provincial averages of 13 and 18. The tendency to the seclusion of women and to passing much time indoors in a smoky atmosphere on account of the coldness of the climate may be assigned as reasons for the prevalence of blindness.

Occupations.

36. The District has until recently had no factory industries, but in 1903 and 1904 three small cotton ginning factories were opened. The coal mines at Mohpāni have been worked since 1860 and 809 operatives were employed in 1903, the number of persons supported by mining being probably about 1500. In 1901, 62 per cent. of the population were supported by pasture and agriculture, this proportion being lower than in any District except Hoshangābād and Nāgpur. Personal servants constitute nearly 5 per cent. of the population and are more numerous proportionately than in any other District. They consist of barbers, water-carriers, washermen, door-keepers, cooks and sweepers. Agriculturists generally maintain a fairly high standard of comfort, and various duties are performed for them by the village servants, which elsewhere they do for themselves. About 5½ per cent. of the population are engaged in the preparation and supply of articles of food and drink. The cotton industry is a fairly strong one for a Northern District, workers in cotton numbering nearly 5 per cent. of the population. About 2 per cent. are workers in metals

and precious stones, this proportion being the third highest in the Province. Workers in iron and steel, carpenters and boot and shoe-makers are also fairly numerous. These facts again indicate a considerable measure of prosperity in the rural area; when goldsmiths and carpenters are numerous the people must have some money to spend on luxuries. But the result of the famines has probably been to reduce many of the artisans to poverty and to force them to take to other occupations, though they may have still returned their hereditary profession at the census. The iron mines at Tendūkhedā formerly supported a considerable number of workers, but the industry has now entirely decayed. About 4000 persons or 1 per cent. of the population are engaged in religious services, this large number being accounted for by the fact that the District is traversed by the sacred Nerbudda, and over 6000 persons or more than 2 per cent. are beggars.

Language.

37. Of the whole population 91 per cent. speak the Bundelī dialect of Western Hindī, the vernacular of Narsinghpur presenting some slight differences from that of Saugor. Bundelī differs from Urdū in certain points of inflection. In Bundelī the long *ā* forming the termination of substantives and adjectives is changed into *o* as *ghoro* for *ghorā*, *baro gattho lāiyo* for *barā gatthā lānā*. The change is also made in the participial form of verbs as *khao* for *khāyā*. The *ko* of the oblique case is also changed to *e* as *tum bazāre gaye hate* for *tum bazār ko gaye the*. If the root of a verb ends in long *ā* it is changed into *ai* to form the verbal noun, as *khaibo* for *khānā*. In the future tense the termination *gā* is not used in Bundelī, and is replaced by the Gujarāti termination *shai* altered into *hai* as *pāni baras hai* for *pāni barsegā*. The past tense of the substantive verb *thā the* is changed to *hato*, *hate*, and the long *ā* in the termination of the present participle is shortened, as for instance, *ghorā daurtā thā* would become *ghoro daurat hato*. In Bundelī as in Urdū the particle *ne* is added to the nominative in the past tenses of transitive verbs, and in this respect Bundelī

differs from Eastern Hindī which omits the particle. In Bundelī there is a tendency to omit the aspirate except when it is the initial letter; thus *pahilā* (first) would become *pailā*, *bahirā* (deaf) *bairā*, *pahalwān* (wrestler) *pailwān*, and so on. This peculiarity is not so much marked in the Narsinghpur dialect as in that of Saugor and Damoh. The Narsinghpur Bundelī has some peculiarities which enable a speaker of it to be easily distinguished. Thus a resident of Saugor would say *u* for *wah* (he), while one of Narsinghpur would say *bā;* in Narsinghpur *i* (this) is called *jā*, *māñ* (*wahāñ*, there) is *bhāñ*, *itaiñ* (*yahāñ*, here) is *jhaiñ*, *kabauñ* (*kabhī*, sometimes) is *kabhauñ*, and so on. The use of these common words at once identifies a Narsinghpur man. A number of special dialects also exist in Narsinghpur. The Kīrs, a cultivating caste living in the west of the District who grow vegetables, speak a form of Mārwāri. The Katias have a dialect in which Marāthī is mixed with Bundelī, and the Bharias, another corrupt dialect. Urdū is returned by over 800 persons and is usually spoken by Muhammadans in the towns of Narsinghpur and Gādarwāra. Marāthī is spoken by about 1,000 persons. Only a very small minority of the Gonds still retain their own language.

RELIGION.

Rural Hinduism.

38. The figures of religion show that Hindus constitute 85 per cent. of the population, Animists 10 per cent. and Muhammadans 4 per cent. The local form of Hinduism is of the usual rural and animistic type, and primitive magical ceremonies and beliefs are retained to a somewhat surprising degree for a comparatively advanced and civilised District. A... the village godlings Hanumān or Mahābīr is pre-... his image carved in half-relief on a slab, coloured in ...lion, and placed in a little dome-shaped temple or on a... being found in nearly every village. He is half m... d half man, being represented with a tail, a... car... nountain in one hand and a staff in ... He ... looks towards the south be...

way to Ceylon. He is worshipped on Tuesdays and Saturdays and is supposed to be the averter of calamities. Khedāpati is the goddess of the earth and the village. She is worshipped as an incarnation of Devī and is represented by a heap of stones, or sometimes has a small hut on a platform with an image. Water is poured over her and when an outbreak of cholera is feared girl children are taken to her shrine and fed there, and clothes are sometimes given to them in order to avert a visitation of the disease. Bhīlat is a deified cowherd, and has a hut in the fields. His votaries are called Parihār or Pandā and are possessed by him at intervals. When this happens the votary gives the usual signs of demoniac possession; sometimes he puts a burning strand of cotton soaked in butter into his mouth. People then go to consult him and standing in front of him ask questions. Sometimes he ascends into a tree and gives answers from there, or goes and stands in the Nerbudda. When people consult him they give him money, which he bestows in charity. The votary is always one of the lower castes. Hardaul, a young Rājput prince who was poisoned by his brother the Rājā of Orchhā, is commonly worshipped, and has a platform outside the village with a post and red flag and sometimes a clay horse. He is worshipped on the occasion of a birth or a marriage. Goāl Bābā is some dead Ahīr whose spirit is deified. When a cow or buffalo does not give milk, a vow is made to him, and if the animal recovers, a cocoanut is offered to him. Māl Bābā is another cattle-god and is supposed to be the spirit of some ancestor who was noted for his wisdom. He is represented by a chain of iron with a ball at the end which is fixed to a tree and his help is solicited when cattle are lost, their recovery being rewarded by an offering of a chicken or a cocoanut. Nāhar Bābā or Bāgh-Dāno is the tiger-god. He has a platform in the forest or where cross-roads meet, and is the protector of men and cattle from tigers. Ahīrs propitiate him for the preservation of their cattle, and Gonds for themselves. Bhūlan Bābā is the godling who makes people forget things and leave them lying where they have halted by the way. Offerings are made to

him when the lost articles are found. Rakat Sokā is the godling who is the enemy of children, drinking their blood and making them grow weak and waste away without visible cause. Vows are made to him for the recovery of the child, and if it does recover he is worshipped with great ceremony, the child being brought before him while the *hom* or fire-sacrifice is performed and an offering made to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Bījā-Sen is in reality a Gond god, but has been transformed into an incarnation of the goddess Devī. She is represented by an iron prong with three points fixed in the ground. Her devotees sometimes thrust this through their tongue or cheeks. She is worshipped at the fasts observed in the months of Chait and Kunwār (March and September). Clothes are also offered to her at weddings, and people make an image of her in the form of a woman and hang it round the necks of children to keep them from harm. She is one of seven sisters, all incarnations of Devī, who are supposed to preside over different diseases; but only two others, Marhai Devī the goddess of cholera, and Sītalā Devī, the goddess of small-pox, are commonly known and worshipped. When cholera breaks out, Marhai Devī is worshipped and Brāhmans are fed. An earthern pot, with wine, glass bangles, a cloth with the image of the goddess in vermilion on it, a rupee, some cakes and incense are offered to the goddess, and then taken outside the village and left at a place where three roads meet. If any one takes up these articles the disease will pass to him and the persons who have been attacked will get well. Only beggars or some one whose magic is stronger than that of the priest of Devī will take them up. If a cow or she-buffalo passes them she will become barren or if she is in milk it will dry up. The vessel and other things are called the *nikāsi* or 'averters,' and if anyone meets the priest at the time he is taking them out to the cross-roads it is believed that he will die at once. Another way of averting cholera is to harness two goats to a toy cart and drive them round the boundary of the village by night. The goats are then sometimes driven away outside the village or sometimes killed and eaten

by the votaries of the goddess. Similarly when anyone is attacked by cholera his family throw clothes and sweetmeats outside the village so that the goddess may take them and spare him.

Magical rites for small-pox.

39. Sītalā Devī is the goddess of small-pox, and when anyone is sick with small-pox the goddess is believed to have entered the house in which he is and to be present in it. Consequently it is held as sacred and at the same time in a manner tabooed. The people of the house do not go to any other house or allow persons from another house to enter theirs. A branch of the *nīm* tree (*Melia indica*) is hung over the door to show that there is small-pox in the house. The *nīm* is the special tree of this goddess and she is supposed to reside in it. In the morning the road in front of the house is swept and water is sprinkled over it. One of the inmates then bathes and goes in his wet clothes carrying a vessel of water and offers it to the goddess. Fire is kept continually burning on the earthen cooking-place, and a lamp is always kept alight by the sick person and must be fed with vegetable and not with kerosine oil. Anybody who comes into the house must take off his shoes and wash his feet, and a Brāhman must not come in at all, as it is thought that his presence would cause the goddess to manifest herself more strongly and make the sufferer worse. A woman in her menstrual period must not enter the house as it is believed that if she sees the sufferer, he will get cataract in his eyes. Both the father and mother practise various rules of abstinence. The father must not wear shoes, shave, eat betel-leaf, smoke or drink liquor. The mother must abstain from eating salt, chillies, turmeric and *ghī*, must not wear ornaments or dress her hair, and must sleep on the ground. No male member of the family enters the patient's room without washing himself and sprinkling his clothes with water. The room must not be swept with a broom but only rubbed with a cloth. When the patient has recovered, the goddess is worshipped and a cradle and a blank sheet of paper are offered to her with cocoanuts, cakes

fried in butter, rice boiled in milk, curds and *nīm*-leaves. A blank sheet of paper is probably included in order that the sufferer's face may similarly be free from marks. If the disease attacks the eyes of a child the mother offers a pair of silver eyes to the goddess in order to save them.

Festivals.

40. The following are some of the ceremonies and customs observed at festivals. 'Aktī' or the third day of the light fortnight of Baisākh (April-May) marks the beginning of agricultural work for the year. On this day the tenants go to the fields taking a new plough. Here worship is offered to 'Machhandrī Mātā', that is the goddess of the earth who returns a hundred-fold. Seven little mounds of earth are raised in the field and on each mound are placed branches of the *palās* (*Butea frondosa*) and *ber* (*Zizyphus jujuba*) trees, and a little of all the autumn grains. The neck ring of a woman is also placed on the first heap. Then a cocoanut is broken and boiled wheat and gram are distributed to those who are present. Turmeric and rice are offered to the plough (*bakhar*), and turmeric is also rubbed on to the bullocks. The village gods who live round the fields are worshipped. Then the ploughman drives seven furrows one after the other without lifting the plough from the ground. The Dhīmar next takes a pot of water and pours it over the plough in a continuous stream. If the stream breaks there will be a long break in the rains. After this the wood-work of the plough is examined. If it is wet all over, the rains will be full and satisfactory, but if any part is left dry there will be a break. The people then return home, taking the seed which has been placed on the mounds, and when sowing begins this is sown first. At harvest when the crop is to be cut some *ghī* and *gur* or country sugar are first thrown into it, and it is worshipped. When all has been reaped except one sheaf this is worshipped and a cocoanut is offered to it. The tenant then cuts it with his own hands, carries it home and ties it to the top of a pole fixed in the threshing-floor. After the grain has been threshed a cocoanut is offered to it; a piece of iron is

put into the heap of corn and a cowdung cake placed on it. The cowdung cake will prevent the heap from getting lower and the iron will scare away evil spirits and prevent them from stealing it. The cowdung cake is the same one which has been worshipped at the Diwāli festival as the symbol of Govardhan, the mountain which Krishna raised aloft to protect the world from a deluge. Hence its capacity to preserve the heap at a good height. While the measurer is measuring the grain, he must not speak to anyone, as if he does the evil spirits may take hold of his words and cause him to measure wrongly. The festival of 'Barsait' takes place on the 15th day of the dark fortnight of Jeth (May-June). This is a woman's festival in honour of Sāvitrī, the pattern of faithful wives, and the female counterpart of Orpheus in Hindu mythology. She was the wife of Satyavān, whom she insisted on marrying though she was warned by a seer that he had only one year to live. When the fatal day arrived Satyavān went out to cut wood and she followed him. There he fell dying to the earth, and she, as she supported him, saw a figure who told her that he was Yama, king of the dead, and that he had come for her husband's spirit. Yama carried off the spirit towards the shades, but Sāvitrī followed him. Her devotion pleased Yama, and he offered her any boon except the life of her husband. She extorted three such boons from Yama, but persisted in following him and he was finally constrained to restore her husband to life.[1] Offerings are made to her under a banyan tree and women who have been warned by an astrologer that they will become widows fast all day and worship her with special zeal. On the next day the *pīpal* (*Ficus religiosa*) is worshipped, offerings being made to it of cakes made with *ghī*, flour and sugar, which are subsequently eaten. It is of special advantage for people who are suffering from the evil influences of Saturn to make offerings to the pīpal tree as this will avert the malignant force of the planet. 'Harī-Jotī' is a low-caste festival observed on the 15th day of the dark half of Shrāwan (July-August).

[1] Dowson's Classical Dictionary of the Hindus, art. Sāvitrī.

Figures of male and female persons are made in cowdung, and flowers, rice and goats are offered to them. The Gonds offer pigs. The ceremony is probably meant to celebrate the intercourse of the sexes. This is also a festival for thieves, who believe that if they can commit a theft on this day and not be detected they will continue to steal with impunity throughout the year. Consequently many people stay up all night to look after their houses.

Festivals—*continued.*

41. The festival of the 'Bhujarias' or wheat plants takes place in the second or light fortnight of Shrāwan (July-August). Wheat is sown in earthen pots or in leaf-cups. The number of pots sown should correspond with the day of the month, that is seven should be sown on the seventh day and so on. Women sow the grain after bathing and placing the pots on a *chauk* or pattern of cross-lines made with flour. They offer turmeric and dried rice to the pots and while sowing they sing songs. On the first day of Bhādon (August-September) the women take the pots in procession to a tank singing as they go; the stalks are taken out and offered first to the gods and then to friends, some people sending them by post. Quarrels are made up on this day. A similar practice is followed at the fasts observed in the months of Chait and Kunwār (March and September). 'Morchhat' is a festival observed on the 6th day of the dark fortnight of Bhādon (August-September). On this day brides and bridegrooms, who have been married during the year, are taken to a tank with their *maurs* or marriage crowns of palm leaves, and these are thrown into the water. The Dasahra and Diwāli festivals are observed in the usual manner. At the Diwāli the ceremony of *gaon bāndhna* is performed among the lower castes. Someone makes a little toy cart and places in it some eggs, vermilion and a cocoanut and goes all round the village boundary by night, leaving the cart on the boundary when he has made a complete circuit. This is supposed to avert epidemics and evil spirits, which are thus prevented from crossing the boundary. The same ceremony is performed when an out-

break of cattle disease takes place. The Holī festival is observed on the last day of Phāgun (February-March). A great bonfire is made in a square or at a crossing of the ways, of wood, cowdung cakes and grass. Children often go and pick up old cart wheels, shutters, stools and any other wooden articles without the owner's leave and throw them on the bonfire. Early on the morning after the Holī, people take away the remains of the fire and with it burn their own *holīs* or small heaps of cowdung cakes at home. Flour-cakes are baked on these and given to children. The ashes of the Holī fire are kept and are efficacious in averting the evil eye and driving away bad spirits.

The Aryā Samāj.

42. Narsinghpur is the principal centre in the Central Provinces of the reforming sect called the Aryā Samāj, founded by a Hindu scholar who died about 1880. He preached a reformed religion condemning idol-worship, pilgrimages, the performance of ceremonies, and indiscriminate charity. The Aryā Samājis denounce the caste system, and advocate the marriage of widows and the admission of Christians and Muhammadans into their community. The members at Narsinghpur hold meetings and publish a monthly magazine. They have established a school in which instruction is given on the same lines as in the central college at Lahore. The Aryā Samāj numbers only a few hundred adherents in the Central Provinces, in great contrast to its strength in Northern India.

Muhammadans and Jains.

43. Muhammadans numbered about 12,000 persons in 1901, of whom 3000 lived in Narsinghpur and Chhindwāra. They own 30 villages. A number of the Muhammadans are Bahnās or cotton-carders, who, in their religious observances, are practically Hindus. There are also several Muhammadan Manihārs or pedlars whose marriage customs and dress are Hindu, and who observe Hindu festivals, though they try to conceal such practices from other Muhammadans. In 1901, about 2500 Jains were enumerat-

ed. The Jain Baniās are a somewhat influential class and own over 100 villages.

Christians.

44. Christians numbered 359 in 1901, of whom 40 were Europeans and Eurasians and the remainder Native Christians. The Hardwicke American Methodist Mission is located in Narsinghpur and in addition to general evangelistic work supports a technical school and orphanage. Narsinghpur is in the Anglican diocese of Nāgpur and is visited by a travelling chaplain from Jubbulpore. It is in the Roman Catholic diocese of Nāgpur.

CASTE.

Colonisation of the District.

45. The people of the District as is shown by their language come principally from Bundelkhand, and the first substantial immigration is believed to have taken place, as already stated, in the 16th century in the reign of Akbar. Sleeman writing in 1825 recorded his impressions based on such scanty relics of information as he was then still able to obtain, as to the manner in which the colonisation of the Nerbudda valley took place, as follows :—'Under the 'Gond Rājās the District seems to have been for the most 'part distributed among feudatory chiefs, bound to attend 'upon the prince at his capital with a stipulated number of 'troops to be employed wherever their services might be 'required, but to furnish little or no revenue in money. 'These chiefs were Gonds and the countries they held for 'the support of their families and the payment of their 'troops and retinue were little more than wild jungles, while 'we may almost trace the subsequent encroachments of cul'tivation by the changes that have taken place in their 'residences, retiring from the plains as they were brought 'into good tillage, and taking shelter in or near the hills, 'where alone any considerable jungle is now to be found. 'Some fourteen or sixteen generations ago a considerable 'change seems to have commenced in the population and 'the cultivation of the plains in this District, as well as in

'the others that border on the Nerbudda. Families of different castes of Hindus from the countries to the north and north-west, oppressed by famine or distracted by domestic feuds in their native territories, emigrated to these parts; and unlike the Muhammadans or Marāthās, who appeared only as military adventurers, they sought a peaceful and a permanent establishment on the soil. Generally they seem to have come first in single families, the heads of whom took a small but well-chosen tract of rich, uncultivated land at a small rent in money or more commonly in kind; and I have traced many of the most respectable and most extensive of these families—Brāhmans, Rājputs and others—back to the time when they paid only a few *mānis* of grain and a few pots of *ghī* a year for immense tracts of waste that are now covered with groves villages and rich cultivation, all owing themselves to the industry of the same family. These families, increasing from generation to generation and augmented by accessions of new immigrants from the same countries and tribes, who invariably joined themselves to the original establishments, became in time valuable and often formidable to the Gond chiefs from their superior industry and skill; a better system of tillage and greater industry created a greater surplus produce, while a bolder and more enterprising spirit enabled them to appropriate it in extending improvement. As these families increased and spread over the plains the Gond population retired to the hills, rather than continue on plains denuded of their jungles. Some of them still live in the plains near the banks of rivers which retain forest, and in other parts, as about Fatehpur, where the soil is too poor to pay the expense of reclaiming it; but I have frequently seen a few Gond families detach themselves entirely from the rest of the village, and establish themselves at another end of the estate in a corner affording them at least the appearance of a jungle. The mahuā tree is the only part of an estate that seems to form in their mind any local tie, and the patel in his annual assessments is obliged to assign to every Gond cultivator

'one or more of these trees, if any stand in his grounds, in 'proportion to the land he may till.'

Principal castes.

46. The most influential landholding castes are now as at Grant's settlement (1863-64) Brāhmans, Rājputs, Rāj-Gonds, Lodhīs, Kurmīs and Kaonrās. But since that period Baniās have acquired over 100 villages by the displacement of the agricultural castes and mainly of the smaller Gond proprietors. Kāyasths, Kirārs, Kalārs and Telis also hold a number of villages, while there are a few Jāt and Muhammadan proprietors. The Lodhīs and Kurmīs belong to Narsinghpur tahsīl and the Kirārs and Kaonrās to Gādarwāra. The Kaonrās were formerly the principal landholding caste in Gādarwāra but have lost a number of their villages. Kurmīs do not as a rule hold large estates. The mālguzār of Kandelī is the leading member of the caste. Jāts are an unimportant caste numerically, but they have a number of villages, including Narsinghpur. Several important estates are held by Rāj-Gond families, chiefly in the Gādarwāra tahsīl, as Chīchli, Gangai, and Madanpur-Dhilwar. The Rāj-Gond families of Chhater and Fatehpur in Hoshangābād also have a number of villages in Narsinghpur. Tenants are mainly Kurmīs, Lodhīs, Kirārs, Kaonrās, Gūjars, Rājputs and Ahīrs, and Gonds in the hilly tracts. The first five of these are good cultivating castes. Dhīmars and Kīrs generally grow vegetables and chillies on the banks of rivers and Kāchhis cultivate small holdings irrigated from wells and grow sugarcane of the heavier kinds for eating. The labouring classes are Chamārs and Mehrās who together form about 10 per cent. of the population, and Gonds who number 35,000 or 11 per cent. These are all in very poor circumstances.

Brāhmans.

47. Brāhmans (24,000) are the third caste in the District in point of numbers and constitute 8 per cent. of the population. They own over 300 villages. The bulk of the Brāhmans come from Northern India, the Kanaujias and Sanādhyas being the leading subdivisions.

There are two local subcastes, the Golāpūrabs and Bhagores. The Golāpūrabs have been settled in the District for a long time back, and are cultivators by profession. They neither beg nor perform priestly functions, and call themselves Ajāchak or non-begging Brāhmans. During the famine of 1897 they refused at first to accept gratuitous relief, but subsequently consented on condition that they would be allowed to pay for it subsequently. Finally however they did not repay the money. They have hitherto allowed widow-marriage but now show a tendency to repudiate it. They have the custom of Antā-Sānta or giving girls in exchange between households. This arises from their paucity of numbers and the difficulty of obtaining wives. If a family to whom they are giving a girl has none to give back to them they take money instead. The Bhagore Brāhmans are found in the adjoining Districts of Hoshangābād and Chhindwāra, and in Bhopāl and Jhānsi as well as in Narsinghpur. The Ahiwāsis are another subcaste found in small numbers. They are of impure descent and are not considered as regular Brāhmans. They allow widow-marriage and were formerly carriers using pack-bullocks. The Marāthā Brāhmans are not very numerous, but hold one or two fine estates, as those of Barmhān and Tendūkhedā. They generally have the title of Pandit. There are also a few Khedāwāl or Gujarāti, and Palliwāl or Mārwāri Brāhmans, the former deriving their name from Khedā, a village in Gujarāt, and the latter from the town of Pāli in Mārwār. The Palliwāls are traders and moneylenders and resemble Baniās in their general characteristics.

Rājputs and Baniās.

48. Rājputs number about 14,000 persons or 5 per cent. of the population. Of the proper septs of Rājputs the Bais, Chauhān, Parihār and Rāthor are found in Narsinghpur, but their marriages are now arranged locally and not with members of the septs living in Rājputāna or Northern India. The Gorais and Raghuvansis are inferior classes of Rājputs who marry among themselves. The Gorais are the most numerous subdivision of Rājputs

and are considered inferior, being said in some cases to be the descendants of kept women. They permit widow-marriage and eat flesh though they do not drink liquor. They plough with their own hands and sometimes do not wear the sacred thread. The Raghuvansis are another subcaste of impure descent like the Gorais, and their status and customs are similar. Some families among them, however, prohibit widow-marriage. The Rājputs are generally good landlords and do not oppress their tenants either by ejecting them or encroaching on their land. Baniās number about 9,000 persons and own over 100 villages, being the largest landowners next to Brāhmans and Lodhīs. The principal subcastes in Narsinghpur are the Parwārs, Agarwāls, Nemās and Gahois. The Parwārs, Oswāls and Golāpūrabs are usually Jains and the others Hindus. The Parwār Baniās, who come from Tīkamgarh or Tehrī State in Bundelkhand, are the most influential. The Agarwāls are so called from the village Agrohā in the United Provinces from which they have immigrated. The Agarwāls always wear the sacred thread in Narsinghpur, while members of other subcastes sometimes do and sometimes do not. The Nemās are said to derive their name from *nīm* half, and to be the descendants of 14 Rājput princes who were learning religion from the same number of Brāhman Rishis or sages at the time that Parasu Rāma was destroying the Kshattriyas. The Brāhmans saved them from Parasu Rāma by pretending that they were Baniās, and so they became members of this caste. The Oswāls are Mārwāri Baniās and take their name from the town of Oos in Rājputāna; they also say they are descended from a Rājput prince, who died and was restored to life again as a Jain mendicant, which faith he subsequently adopted. The Oswāls are generally well off. The Mahesrīs (from Mahesa, 'Great Lord,' an epithet of Siva) are another subdivision who come from Rājputāna. Mārwāri Baniās as a class are not now especially desirous of acquiring landed estates in Narsinghpur, as they find more profitable methods of employing their capital. As landlords they have a bad

reputation for ejecting their tenants and reletting the holdings on payment of a premium.

49. Lodhīs number some 30,000 persons or 10 per cent. of the population, being next to Gonds the most numerous caste in the District. They hold about 200 villages and with the exception of Brāhmans are the largest landlords. Grant writes as follows of this caste:—'The Lodhīs are 'generally considered to be a quiet industrious race of 'cultivators and nothing more. Here they have attained, 'in the principal members of their caste, a considerable posi-'tion, combined with a reputation for turbulence and 'unsteadiness. Their chiefs in general have adopted the 'wild costume and habits of the Gond Thākurs, and it would 'be difficult to recognise the descendants of peaceable 'peasants in the swaggering, strangely accoutred Rājās, who 'support their style and title by a score or two of ragged 'matchlockmen and a dilapidated mud fort on a hillside. 'As far back as the time of the cession the bad reputation of 'the Lodhīs for turbulence and evasion was noticed by 'British officers. And though they have now lost much of 'their distinctive character for ill, and the Lodhīs of the 'plain are scarcely to be distinguished from people of other 'classes, it is yet noticeable that the principal instigator of 'rebellion both in the Bundelā rising of 1842, and in 1857, 'was a hill Lodhī, the Rājā of Hīrāpur.' On the other hand the most loyal supporter of the British arms in 1857 was another Lodhī, the Rājā of Imjhirā. The Lodhīs have now largely discarded their turbulent habits, but in the Nerbudda valley they still have a reputation for being quarrelsome, and disputes over land are frequent among Lodhī cultivators, often eventuating in a fight with sticks. The principal subdivisions in Narsinghpur are the Mahālodhī, Janghele, Singrore, Mahdele, Bhadauria, and Jaria. The Mahālodhīs and Jarias are subcastes marrying among themselves and are lower than the others. The higher divisions are exogamous clans marrying with each other. The Bhadaurias take their name from Bhadāwar State, and

Lodhīs.

the Singrores from Singraur, in ancient times a large town in the Allahābād District. The Mahdele are the highest clan locally and do not permit widow-marriage. The Lodhīs use the titles of Rao, Dīwān and Chaudharī.

Jāt, Gūjar, Kirār, Kurmī, Ahīr, Kaonrā.

50. The Jāts number only about 1000 persons and came into Narsinghpur from Dholpur in Rājputāna towards the end of the 18th century. One of the first immigrants was Rao Jagannāth, the ancestor of the present proprietor of Narsinghpur. He built the temple of Narsingh which gives the town its name and his success attracted others. The Jāts are the great cultivating caste of the Punjab, and have obtained some fame as warriors in Indian history. Here they are mainly tenants and labourers, only a few holding villages. They allow widow-marriage, eat flesh and drink liquor, though this is seldom used. They wear the sacred thread. The Gūjars are also a Punjābi caste, well known in history as freebooters, but those of Narsinghpur are steady agriculturists and excellent cultivators, though they have not the same reputation as their caste-fellows who grow irrigated wheat in Nimār. They own a few villages in Narsinghpur. The Kirārs number about 4 per cent. of the population and hold some 20 villages. They probably came to Narsinghpur from Gwalior about the 17th century. They also call themselves Dhākar, or mixed Rājputs, and some of them have lately adopted the sacred thread, but they allow widow-marriage. They are now a cultivating caste, but they may have been originally corn-chandlers (Kirād) and have so obtained their name. This would account for their proverbial love of money and keenness over a bargain. The Kirār's prayer is supposed to be 'Oh God, give me two bullocks and I shall plough up the common way.' Another proverb about them is 'If you put a rupee between two Kirārs, they become like *must* buffaloes in Kunwār.'[1] They probably immigrated along with the Gūjars and Raghuvansis with whom they will eat food cooked without water. Kurmīs are not

[1] Quoted in Mr. Standen's Betūl Settlement Report.

numerous in Narsinghpur but they hold about 50 villages. They are generally indebted, though they have a good reputation as cultivators. The Kaonrās are a caste peculiar to Narsinghpur where they number some 14,000 persons or 5 per cent. of the population, and hold 50 villages. They were formerly the principal proprietors in the Gādarwāra tahsīl, but have lost a number of their villages. They have been supposed to be a branch of the Kawar tribe of Bilāspur, but there is no confirmation of this theory, as the Kawars have totemistic exogamous groups, while those of the Kaonrās are named after villages in Bundelkhand, from which territory they say they have immigrated in comparatively recent times. They claim to be Rājputs and to be descended from the Kauravas of the Māhabhārata, but this heroic genealogy has nothing to substantiate it except the resemblance of the names. They allow widow-marriage and do not usually wear the sacred thread, while they drink liquor and eat food cooked without water from Kurmīs and Lodhīs. The Kaonrās are locally considered to be close-fisted and vindictive. They are economical in their marriages, the celebration of which is confined to one day, so that the expense may be diminished. As landlords they have a somewhat bad reputation for trying to add to their home-farm at the expense of their tenants. The Ahīrs constitute about 3 per cent. of the population but own only a very few villages. The Jijhotia Ahīrs, the highest subcaste, who derive their name from Jajhotī, the classical term for Bundelkhand, have abandoned the traditional occupation of cattle-tending and have taken to cultivation. If one of them works as a herdsman or cattle-breeder he is temporarily outcasted. The Jijhotia Ahīrs do not drink liquor, but the others consume it freely, and will also eat fowls after they have been offered to a god or goddess. They have a special deity called Māl, who is worshipped in the shape of a metal doll or piece of stone kept inside the house or just outside it on a platform. In commemoration of their descent from Krishna and of his dances with the milkmaids, the Ahīrs dance and sing at the Diwāli festival, dressed

fantastically in a cloth of network decorated with shells and coloured tassels. The Ahīrs have a certain character for violence and a local saying about them is 'The Ahīr has no debts in the jungles, but only when he comes to *kacheri*,' the point being that it was formerly difficult to enforce execution against them in their homes.

Minor castes.

51. The Kāchhis, numbering about 4 per cent. of the population, are the market gardeners of the community. They are believed to be an occupational offshoot of Kurmīs and their special profession is to grow vegetables and garden crops on small patches of irrigated land. They are peaceably disposed and rarely acquire any property. The Kīrs are another small caste who generally live on river-banks and grow melons on the sandy stretches, and castor-oil and vegetables on alluvial soil. They immigrated from Jaipur and still retain a corrupt Mārwāri dialect, while their women wear the Jaipur dress. They also wear red lac bangles on their wrists and arms. The men tie their pagrīs so as to leave the crown of the head uncovered, and wear necklaces of black wooden beads with silver images of Bhairon and Devī. The Kīrs use buffaloes for riding on, especially in their marriage processions, while other Hindus object to riding on a buffalo, as he is the animal on which Yama, the god of death, rides. Mallāhs, Kewats and Dhīmars are the boating and fishing castes; Mallāh and Kewat are synonymous terms in Narsinghpur. This caste has abandoned its traditional profession and taken to agriculture, and the Mallāhs usually grow hemp, as other Hindus object to doing it. Mallāh is an Arabic word meaning boatman, but the caste are Hindus and not Muhammadans. The Dhīmars are numerous, constituting about 4 per cent. of the population. They are engaged in a variety of occupations. They are primarily boatmen and fishermen and also cultivate along the banks of rivers where the soil is poor. They also grow *singhāra* or water-nut in tanks, parch and sell gram, and are employed as personal servants and as the bearers of palanquins at weddings. The courts

held at Chaurāgarh by the Gonds and Marāthās have left their traces in such castes as the Jasondhīs or bards and genealogists who sang the *jas* or hymns in praise of kings. These people have now a bad reputation for stealing. The Kaderās or Golandāzis were so called because they used to make *golās* or cannon-balls and *bāns* or grenades. Now that their former occupation is gone, they have taken to making fireworks or lacquer toys and bangles. The making of bangles is also an occupation of the Patwās, who are found in considerable numbers for the size of the District; they derive their name from *pāt*, a silk thread, because in addition to bangles they make silk tassels, strings for necklaces of beads, and the *rākhīs* or threads which everyone has tied round his wrist at the Rakshābandhan festival. There are also a number of Manihārs or pedlars, who are both Hindus and Muhammadans. They are workers in glass and tinfoil, and their special business is to make and apply the tinsel coating placed on the better sort of bangles. They also sell women's trinkets and cheap ornaments and ordinary articles of stationery. The Mirdhās are a small caste peculiar to Narsinghpur. Enquiry has elicited the fact that they are a branch of the Khangār or Dahait caste of Saugor and Damoh. The names of their exogamous sections tally with those of Khangārs and they have the same story of their ancestors having been massacred at a fort in Orchhā State, and of one pregnant woman escaping and hiding under a *kusum* tree (*Schleichera trijuga*), which consequently they revere. Like Khangārs they regard Muhammadan eunuchs and Fakīrs with special friendship on the ground that it was a Fakīr who sheltered their ancestress when the rest of the caste were massacred by Rājputs, and Fakīrs do not beg at their weddings. One explanation of the name is that this section of the caste were born from a Muhammadan father and a Dahait woman, and hence were called Mīr-Dahaits or Mirdahās, *Mīr* being an honorific term for a Muhammadan. Some of them are village watchmen and the others cultivators and labourers. The Rajbhars and Bharias are kindred castes, the Bhars being a Dravi-

dian tribe, who were formerly dominant in a part of Northern India, while the Rajbhars, like the Rāj-Gonds, became a separate subcaste formed of those Bhars who were landholders. They are supposed to have been brought into the Central Provinces by one of the Chedi or Kalachuri Rājput kings of Tripura, near Jubbulpore, whom they regard as an ancestor. They are now labourers and farm-servants and are usually abjectly poor and indebted to their employers, whom they serve like bond slaves from generation to generation. They are very simple and have no comprehension of accounts. The Kuchbandhias are a small caste who make brushes for Korīs or weavers. The Korī is proverbially a most foolish person and anybody's tool like the tailor in England, but he can lord it over the Kuchbandhia ; hence the saying "*Korī kā bigāri Kuchbandhia*" or the Kuchbandhia is the only person who has to work for the Korī. The Kuchbandhias have a reputation for thieving. The Dhānuks or 'bowmen' are another low caste of labourers and farm-servants and are perhaps an offshoot of Basors, though they now disclaim all connection with them and sometimes call themselves Dhānkri Rājputs. They have given up eating unclean animals like fowls and pigs and do not drink liquor, but they allow widow-marriage. They will take food cooked without water from a Lodhī but not from a Rājput.

Gonds.

52. The Gonds number 35,000 persons or 11 per cent. of the population. They are the most numerous caste in the District and next to Brāhmans and Lodhīs the largest landholders, having about 140 villages. At the 30 years' settlement they had 205 villages, while Baniās owned only 18 as against 112 at present. The smaller landowners have practically all been ousted and the large estates of the Gādarwāra tahsīl have in some cases only been saved to their Gond proprietors by the assumption of management by Government under the Court of Wards Act. The two main divisions of the tribe in Narsinghpur are the Rāj-Gonds or aristocracy, and the Dhur or Dust Gonds, the plebs. The Rāj-Gonds have adopted the religious and social observances of Hindus

and wear the sacred thread. They often marry two wives, one a Rāj-Gondin and the other an ordinary Gondin. This practice is said to be a reminiscence of the time when Rājput adventurers married Gond wives in order to get the kingdom. Sometimes the marriage takes place with the dagger of the Rājā, he himself not going at all. The Gonds worship their god Burā Deo and also revere the *sāj* and mahuā trees by fixing a sword in the tree and placing a gun against it. Except for a few landowners, who are usually indebted, the Gonds are very poor, and their houses, clothes and furniture are of insignificant value. In many cases they have only a small garden plot for spade cultivation, and where they have holdings they only grow the inferior autumn millets. They subsist for a considerable period on their earnings at the wheat harvest, eked out by the collection of mahuā and other forest produce and the sale of head-loads of timber and grass. Grant wrote as follows of the Gonds :—'The Dhur-Gonds, where unaffect- 'ed by contact with the men of the plains, are a wild 'race, supported by a blind fatalism through lives of pri- 'vation, disease and danger. A true Gond will commit a 'murder, but he will not tell a lie to screen himself. He is 'skilled in medicinal herbs, but in illness he prefers trust- 'ing to fate. He will pass a tiger without turning aside, 'but will desert his nearest and dearest on the approach of 'cholera. Like a dog, he puts fidelity above all other 'virtues, and will take life without hesitation at the bidding 'of his master. These qualities adapt the Gonds well for 'services of danger and they are said to make good miners 'in the coal mines of Mohpāni. As soldiers they were tried 'in the police battalions raised during the disturbances of '1857. Their conduct before the enemy was, I believe, 'equal to the expectation formed of them, but it was found 'difficult to lick them into shape and to give them the bear- 'ing and appearance of soldiers. In appearance they most 'resemble the Turanian type, being flat-nosed, thick-lipped, 'and straight-haired. Their frames are generally short and 'thick-set and those few of them, who pass unscathed

'through the daily risks and hardships of their forest life, 'are remarkable for longevity. Their hold upon life is 'shown, not only by the age to which they attain, but by their 'freedom from the usual signs of age. A Gond ordinarily 'retains sound teeth and black hair up to the day of his death. 'It may be noted that among their magical rites they have 'one singularly akin to mesmerism. The operator by look-'ing fixedly into the eyes of his patient is supposed to attain 'a certain influence which may be and sometimes is utilised 'for healing purposes.' The Gond women may be known by a yellow *godnā* or tattoo-mark on the forehead, and by their peculiar method of dressing their hair. The Gonds still continue to measure distances by putting a leaf of the *jāmun* tree in their headcloth, and considering that they have gone a *kos* when it dries up. The length of a Gondi *kos* is thus naturally very variable.

Mehrās and Chamārs.

53. Mehrās number about 15,000 or 5 per cent. of the population. They are not considered as an impure caste in Narsinghpur so far that touching them need be avoided. The village watchmen are usually recruited from this caste and the men who hold these posts are better off than their fellows, and in rare cases have even acquired enough property to enable them to start business as moneylenders on a small scale. They also spin a coarse thread and weave it into thick cloth for quilts and floor-cloths, and are cultivators and field labourers. The Chamārs are about equal in number to the Mehrās, also constituting 5 per cent. of the population. They are the lowest menial and labouring class, and as a rule are miserably poor. A few of them are tenants but the vast majority are despised and bullied helots. They serve as village drudges and are generally selected for the performance of *bigār* or forced labour. Their women act as midwives. They are the only class who will remove the carcases of dead cattle, and they eat them without regard to the disease from which the animal may have died. But the Chamār does not touch the corpse of a horse, dog, or uncloven-footed animal, nor does he kill a cow or ox though

he eats their flesh. The following extract from the Provincial Monograph on the Leather Industry[1] may be quoted here :—'In Narsinghpur we are struck by the 'existence of a subcaste of genuine Chamārs, the Deswārs, 'who have climbed to the level of agriculturists. Naturally 'enough, having achieved this rise in society, your Deswār 'considers himself polluted by the very touch of leather. 'At the other extremity of the Chamār social scale are the 'Mahobias and Dohars of Narsinghpur. These have sunk—'for even a Chamār can sink—to the very lowest stage of 'casual labour, grass cutting and the like, and seldom, if 'ever, work in leather. Kurils make the *nokedār* or rustic 'shoe and nothing else. They are immigrants into the 'District of Narsinghpur.'

SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS.

Villages.

54. The following notice of a Narsinghpur village is taken from Grant's Settlement Report :—'Not less prepossessing to 'those accustomed to the high mud-'walled enclosures of Hindustān are the interiors of the 'better villages. The mālguzār's house usually stands out 'well above the other buildings, and is often a handsome 'two-storied edifice of brick and stone. Inside are large 'courtyards well stocked with cattle and surrounded by 'dwelling-houses and granaries. Few houses are without 'their pets—spotted deer, antelope or rams—and everything 'tends to create an impression of rude comfort and plenty. 'The cultivators' houses, though of course inferior to those 'of their landlords, are by no means devoid of all pretension 'to appearance. The better kind are neat cottages with tiled 'roofs. The gaily painted verandah posts and the clean 'plastered platforms, bordered by moulded cornices and 'ornamented by large flower jars, show a decided taste for 'comfort and even for luxury. The meaner quarter of the 'village, tenanted by the weavers, the labourers and the 'menial classes of the little community, has seldom, it is

[1] By Mr. C. G. Chenevix Trench, C.S.

'true, other than a squalid appearance. But even here the 'Gonds, who fill the place of hewers of wood, though not of 'drawers of water, are better lodged than in the wretched 'grass huts, which barely shelter them in their own wilds.' The village is usually built on some elevated mound of gravel or limestone rising from the level of the fields. This is necessary, because the heavy black soil after rain softens into a stiff bog in which every step is a fresh difficulty. If possible the site is chosen on the bank of a stream so as to obtain a convenient water-supply, according to the saying *Gaon basaiye, nadia dekh* or "First find a river and then settle your village." Tanks are not numerous in Narsinghpur except in large villages, and such as exist are usually shallow ponds which dry up in the hot weather. The village is usually traversed by one main road from which lanes or bye-roads take off. The water-supply is obtained from wells, of which there may be several, but few of them have masonry parapets. The walls of the ordinary wells are shored up with stones or wooden stakes laid horizontally. If there are several wells, one is reserved for the impure castes, and if there is only one they have a special *ghāt* or place from which to draw water. Gonds are also not admitted to the ordinary well; this is said to be because they worship different gods. The wells are annually repaired and the mud deposited at the bottom cleared out by the villagers working together. The village usually has a couple of temples of Mahādeo, Hanumān or Rāmchandra, and if there are several Baniās there will also be a Jain temple. Water and flowers are offered daily by the villagers and vermilion on special occasions, *bel* leaves to Mahādeo when available, and to Hanumān a cocoanut on occasional Tuesdays and Saturdays. During the hot weather Mahādeo has a *gharā* or vessel of water placed over him on a tripod, so that water may drip on to him from a hole in the bottom. This may be intended merely to keep him cool, or possibly by the exercise of sympathetic magic to induce him to give rain, as when the rains hold off, Mahādeo is frequently plunged in a bucket of water, with the idea that being wet himself he will

thus give rain. The temples are cleaned annually by the proprietor or the villagers and kept in repair. Occasionally a cultivator who has grown old and has no children builds a temple and endows it with a plot of land. Outside the village are the huts or platforms which form the shrines of the village gods, distinguished by flags. The houses are not built so closely as in towns, and generally stand in small enclosures or *bārās* surrounded by hedges of thorn or bamboo. They are often divided into quarters or *purās* inhabited by different castes as the Dhīmars, Basors, Chamārs, Korīs and Kalārs. Dhobīs and Kumhārs keep donkeys and Basors keep pigs, and these animals are not admitted into the village on account of their impurity. Fowls and goats are not usually to be found in the Northern Districts, nor are tame pigeons kept, though some houses have a parrot in a cage.

Houses.

55. The houses in the *havelī* tract are generally built with unbaked mud bricks called *chaukās* about 18 inches long and 12 inches wide. The roofs are covered with burnt tiles of a clumsy shape. As bamboos are not plentiful, pulse stalks are frequently used as a support to the tiles. In the forest tracts, the houses are usually thatched and built with bamboo matting or pulse stalks plastered with mud. The mālguzār's or proprietor's house is the most important building in the village and is called *bākhar*. It stands in a courtyard with a *paur* or entrance gate and with out-houses at the sides and the main house along the back wall. In front of the porch may be a *nīm*, pīpal or *jāmun* tree with a platform, where the proprietor and the substantial tenants will sit and talk in the evenings. In wet weather they adjourn to the *dālān* or guest-room inside the porch. The inner courtyard is called *chauk*, and this is used for bathing and for sleeping in the summer season, and for the feasting of guests at marriages or other ceremonies. Large pits are also dug in the *chauk* for storing grain. They are lined inside with leaves of the *tendū* or banyan trees, and the grain is then covered with these and plastered

over with a mixture of cowdung and earth. These pits are called *khaundias* and one of them will hold from 50 to 100 *mānis* (of 320 lbs.) of grain. One of the side sheds is used for cattle and another for the grain required for consumption, straw and agricultural implements. If the owner has a large number of cattle, only the milch-cows and plough-bullocks are kept inside the enclosure and the remainder in a yard behind. In the centre of the courtyard is a small brick pillar containing a plant of the sacred *tulsī* (*Ocymum sanctum*) which is watered and worshipped daily. A tenant's house is one long room with two or three partitions, in one of which he will keep the cattle, and in another the fuel, grass and implements, while the family will live in the third. The whole house may be 30 to 70 feet long and 10 feet wide with a verandah of 3 or 4 feet. Behind the house is frequently a manure heap, on to which the droppings and urine of cattle are thrown daily. The roof is used as a drying place for green chillies, plums, damp grass and unripe grain, and wet clothes are also spread on it. The door if of wood is secured by a chain or a beam fitting into sockets in the side posts. Some houses have only screens of bamboo matting secured to the side posts with strings. Grain may be kept in the pits already described or in *bandās* or small walled rooms inside the house, or in large earthen receptacles 8 or 10 feet high. Cowdung cakes are kept either inside or in heaps protected by thatch covers behind. If the family consists of several persons, one or two probably sleep in the fields for most of the year. One will sleep in the verandah to look after the cattle, and for the others small partitions will be made with screens of arhar-stalks. Children sleep with their mothers until they arrive at adolescence. Farm-servants permanently employed usually live in the houses of their masters, and others will make a little hut of matting with a thatched roof to live in.

Furniture.

56. In the *dālān* or entrance-hall of a landowner's house is placed a *takhat* or wooden dais on which visitors sit and talk. The furniture of the house will consist of a few *pīdhis* or small wooden stools with seats of *palās*-fibre

for sitting on and a wooden cot covered with *newār* tape for each member of the household. A long pole called *arganī*, slung to the roof, serves the purpose of a wardrobe for holding the bedding and wearing apparel of the inmates. The other articles found are a *chūlha* or earthen stove, a *chakkī* or handmill, and a *gursī* or earthen pot in which cowdung cakes are continually kept burning to supply a light when needed as matches are not much used in the interior ; scythes, axes, baskets, winnowing fans, corn-measures, brass cooking and eating vessels, a *huqqā* and some *chilams* or pipe-bowls ; earthen pots containing mango and lemon pickles and milk and curds are slung to the roof by netting to keep them from dogs and cats. On a shelf in the cooking room are kept some brass idols of Rāma, Lakshman and Sītā, which are worshipped daily, being washed and anointed with sandal-paste and presented with offerings of flowers and rice. Except children, none of the family will take food until Thākurji, the local incarnation of Rāma or Vishnu has been worshipped. A tenant's furniture is even simpler than that of a mālguzār. He will have two or three brass vessels and plates, while his other vessels will be of earthenware. Probably there will not be enough cots for the whole family and some will sleep on the ground. The bedding will consist of mattresses and one or two *dorias* or thick cotton cloths and blankets. The women will have an *arsī* or small circular mirror about two inches in diameter bought for half an anna in the bazar.

Food.

57. Mālguzārs have two meals a day, at mid-day and in the evening about 8 P.M. At the mid-day meal they will eat boiled rice and pulse with *chapātis* and vegetables. In the evening they eat *chapātis* and vegetables with pickles or salad of coriander leaves, dressed with salt and pepper, and sometimes drink milk. On festivals they have wheat-cakes fried in *ghī*, or rice boiled in milk with *pāpars* or thin baked cakes of mūng or urad mixed with spices and salt, or *raita* or small pieces of pumpkin boiled and mixed with curds, salt and pepper. After each meal they smoke a

huqqā and eat *pān-supāri*. Cultivators who work with their own hands have a third meal in the morning before going out to work. This consists of the remains of the evening meal of the night before eaten cold. Tenants eat kodon or kutkī instead of rice, and juār, gram or bājra, instead of wheat, the latter grains being reserved for special occasions. In the evening they drink *pej* or rice or kodon boiled with water, to make a thin paste. After meals they smoke a *chilam*, usually smoking tobacco grown in their own gardens which is very strong. The practice of chewing tobacco is now declining, as it injures the teeth. They eat vegetables in the rains and cold weather, the most common being *bhindī* (*Hibiscus esculentus*), pumpkins, and *turaiyā* (*Luffa acutangula*). The buds of the *saujna* tree (*Moringa pterygosperma*) are eaten as a vegetable, boiled with curds, and mixed with salt and chillies.

Clothes.

58. Landowners wear *angarkhās* or long coats of fine white cotton cloth and *dupattās* or head-cloths of the same cloth either white or black. Only a few wear coloured head-cloths or regular *pagrīs* or turbans. The local fashion is to wear the *dupattā* or *pagrī* tilted to one side, so as to come nearly over the eye. For visits of ceremony they put on *paijāmas* or trousers. A small piece of cloth for use as a handkerchief is carried over the shoulder or tied to the waist. Cultivators have *mirzais* or short coats of country cloth which are stuffed with cotton in the cold weather. Labourers have a short sleeveless coat and a pair of loin-cloths ; when one of these is replaced, the old one serves as a head-cloth. The well-to-do now wear English or Indian mill cloth and only poor people wear country cloth. The usual ornaments worn by men are a *murkī* or thick gold ring in the ear, a *bāli* or ordinary earring and a *sānkar* or small chain of gold on the ear. Tenants do not usually wear jewellery, but if they get enough money, they tie a gold mohur round the neck. A man proceeding on a journey should always have at least a gold or silver ring on his finger, so that he can realise its value if he stands in need

of money. The wearing of a silver ring of value at least equivalent to the expense of one day's food is a religious injunction among the Muhammadans. The ordinary dress of women differs somewhat from that of Saugor and Damoh. The principal garment here is the *angochhā*, a small piece of white cotton cloth, which covers the hips, but does not come below the knees. The upper part of the body is covered by a *pharia* or piece of coloured cloth, usually red, of about the same size. Over the breasts an *angia* is worn which differs from a *choli* in being tied behind. The *lahengā* or skirt, the ordinary garment in Saugor and Damoh, is also worn, but in Narsinghpur it is either tucked up in front or drawn behind through the legs so as to expose the lower part of the thigh. Unmarried girls do not wear *angias*, but instead have a *kurtī* or loose coat buttoning in front. They also usually go with their heads uncovered, while married women always have the upper cloth drawn over their heads. Shoes are always worn; men's shoes have not the same high flaps as in Saugor and Damoh. Women frequently wear sandals. The ornaments usually worn by women are glass bangles, silver armlets called *bahuntā* and *bānkra*, and bracelets, and *khangorias* or round necklets of silver; through the nose is worn a silver pin with a gold head outside, or with the richer classes a ring of gold with a row of pearls; the usual earrings consist of a half hemisphere of gold called *karanphūl*; while the forehead has a silver band with two chains on the temples called *bindia*. Rings of silver are worn on the fingers and great toes. Women usually have the little glass disc called *tiklī* in the centre of the forehead.

Village society.

59. Tenants and labourers form the bulk of the population of every village, but the larger ones have perhaps a schoolmaster, a forest guard, and a patwāri. These officials represent to the villager the visible power of the Government, and they are all persons to be propitiated in order to avoid trouble. The schoolmaster has as much influence as anyone, owing to his power of making complaints of the absence of

children from school, such a complaint entailing a visit of the parent to the tahsil headquarters to be warned. If the schoolmaster is also in charge of the local post office, he can sell or refuse to sell stamps at his own convenience in order to give trouble to those whom he dislikes. On the other hand the schoolmaster gains by popularity, because he improves the attendance at his school, and if he has, as is frequently the case, some knowledge of country medicine and the uses of the drugs locally procurable, he can be of great benefit to the villagers. The schoolmaster has frequently, owing to his education, considerable influence over the local proprietor. If there is a schoolmistress, she also enjoys a good position in the village. The postal peon, who comes round once a week, is hospitably received by the proprietor and by those to whom he brings letters or money-orders, probably obtaining a present of a few pice from the latter. The forest guard or forester is another important factor in village life especially to the primitive tribes, who may obtain small facilities from him for the collection of produce, while in return they attend him and give any assistance he requires, and are the first to be summoned to help in extinguishing a fire. If the proprietor and tenants are not on good terms with the forest officials, they run the risk of getting into difficulties over breaches in the regulations. The police have naturally great authority. When the beat-constable arrives at the village, he is hospitably lodged in the mālguzār's house, while his satellite, the kotwār, procures provisions for him usually at somewhat less than the market rate. If he is unscrupulous he may pick up brinjals, or mangoes from the shop of the Kāchhi, usually a man of peace, without paying for them. The patwāri also has influence with the cultivators, though as a rule he is not inclined to exercise it unfairly. If he has a grudge against anyone however, his method is to tell him that the boundary marks of his holding are wrong according to the revised map, and unless he is propitiated this will result in a revenue case. The village is usually divided into shares among the proprietary family or families, and the share-

holders frequently quarrel among themselves, especially over the appointments to the office of lambardār or mukaddam which lead to much unnecessary litigation. Sometimes each shareholder has a following among the tenants, and the village is split up between the contending factions. The village may have a Baniā or shopkeeper who sells flour, pulse, ghī, country sugar, tobacco and simple drugs; he goes about to the neighbouring villages on market-days, carrying his stock-in-trade on a bullock or pony. There will also be a Bahna or cotton-cleaner who does a good business in the cold weather when the whole village come to him to have their coats and caps stuffed with cotton. In a fairly large village there will probably also be a local goldsmith, and a Māli and Barai, the former of whom supplies the *maur* (marriage crown), *bahrās* or brooms, and *mālas* or garlands of flowers for festive occasions, while the latter sells betel-leaves and lime, but does not make up *bīdas*, or betel-leaves folded and containing areca-nut, lime and catechu, like his more accomplished confrère in towns. There will probably be a few houses of Telis who press and sell oil and oil-cake.

Daily life of the cultivator.

60. The day of the village is made up of 8 *pahars* or watches, four of the day counting from dawn and four of the night. The ordinary life of a cultivator gives little respite from toil in a District like Narsinghpur. Rising in the morning he washes his face and hands, using a little earth for the latter, and cleans his teeth with a twig of the *nīm* tree (*Melia indica*), eats some cold food left over from the evening meal of the night before, and goes out to the fields. His wife sweeps the floor, keeping the door open as she does so, for it is a common belief that Lakshmī, the goddess of wealth, visits every house in the morning, and enters into those which she finds clean and open, but returns if the door is shut. She then goes and fetches water from the village well, usually in *gāghars* or large earthen pots. After this she grinds the juār or wheat for the day's food, if she has not already done so

before dawn, it being a common custom of women to get up at 3 or 4 A.M. and grind the corn for the day. She then milks the cows or buffaloes and drives them to the cattle-stand outside the village, where she makes them over to the village grazier or *baredī*. She removes the dung and urine from the cattle-stalls, and if it is the dry season, makes cakes for fuel by mixing the dung with chopped grass and a little water, unless she is in a position to employ a female servant or *gobarwāli* to do this for her. She next cleans the *chaukā* or cooking-place, sweeping the hearth clear of ashes, and plastering it with fresh cowdung, cleans the brass eating vessels by rubbing them with earth or ashes, and churns the buttermilk, after which she bathes and cooks the mid-day meal. By this time her husband returns from the fields and bathes and eats his meal. The little children will eat from the same dish, but the wife will wait to eat until her husband has finished. After the meal the man will smoke his *chilam* or clay pipe-bowl, filled with home-grown and very strong tobacco, drawing the smoke through his hands; after a short rest he returns to work. In the cold weather, when the days are comparatively short, his food is frequently taken to him in the fields. The cultivator cannot usually afford betel-vine, but he keeps a piece of areca-nut in his *thailia* or little bag and eats a little after meals, or gives it to a guest. After taking her meal the wife again cleans the hearth and vessels, picks the earth and pebbles out of the grain for the next day's food, waters the calves or plough-cattle which may be left at home and gives them straw, and may then sleep or go out for a gossip with a neighbour, the conversation generally turning on the degree of liberality displayed by the hosts at recent social entertainments, such as marriages, the appearance and character of the bridal pair, and births, deaths and other events occurring in the village. At evening she goes home to prepare the meal for her husband on his return from the fields, first taking back her cattle from the grazier and milking them, unless she has a son or daughter to do this for her. At dark her husband returns with the plough-cattle, who follow him home of their own

accord, and immediately throws himself down to rest for a time on a cot or on the ground, while the wife waters them and gives them straw. The man then rises, washes his face and hands and eats his evening meal while the two talk together. After the meal the husband may go out to the mālguzār's house tying a little tobacco in the corner of his head-cloth, or in the cold weather may sit with the villagers round the *alāo*, a hole dug in the ground and filled with a fire of cowdung cakes, and here the conversation may continue up to midnight. In the hot weather the place of meeting is changed from the fire-hole to the platform under a *nīm* or pīpal tree, and stories from the *Baitāl-pachchīsi*, a book on the exploits of a demon named *Baitāl*, or the *Tiriyā Charita*, may be read, or old legends exchanged of the Mutiny and the Pindāris. The meeting disperses when Thākurji or Rāma, the chief village god, goes to bed, an event which is signalised by the beating of conches and cymbals. If the peasants are religiously disposed, they may go to the temple of Thākurji and sing religious songs, to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals. Having saluted the priest and the god, each newcomer rings the bell of the temple and walks 5 or 7 times round it; he then approaches the temple, and receives in his hand a spoonful or two of the *charanāmrita* or sacred water, mixed with leaves of the *tulsī* or basil; he sips this from his hand slowly, holding one hand below the other, so that not a drop of the precious liquid may be spilt; if any falls to the ground it must be wiped up with a cloth. But in the cold weather the cultivator has not much time to stay at home in the evenings, but eats his meal and then taking his *lāthi* or stick and a burning cowdung cake, goes off to watch the crops, accompanied by his dog. With the cowdung cake he makes a small fire to warm himself by, and also to scare away the animals which damage the crops. The villager does not usually possess matches, but keeps in his little bag a piece of iron, a flint-stone and some cotton waste, which he can set alight when required by striking the iron against the flint. In the house cowdung cakes are kept buried in ashes and the *diyā* or earthen lamp is lighted

by strips of hemp-stalk which burn well. Unless there is a Dhobī in the village the people wash their own clothes. They are shaved once a fortnight or once a month by the barber. Men and women oil their hair once a fortnight or once a month. The cultivator has very little cash, and his transactions are usually carried on in grain, except when he has to sell grain for paying his rent. On market-days he goes to the bazar carrying some *ghī* (clarified butter) or grain, which he exchanges for oil, sugar, turmeric, salt and vegetables. Women buy a little *missī* or toothpowder, and one of the small mirrors already referred to, which lasts for years.

Social and religious customs.

61. The villagers show great respect to their elders and to officials. A woman will not walk on ground which has been spread with cowdung by her mother-in-law or other elder relation if she can avoid it, and if unavoidable she will make obeisance before putting her foot on it. Women visiting each other's houses observe the same formality. If she meets an elder member of her family out-of-doors, she will stop talking or laughing, take off her shoes, and stand aside to let him pass. Husbands and wives do not talk to each other in the presence of the elders of their family. Men similarly give the salutation of *Rām, Rām*, *Pālāgi*, or *Namaskār* to their elders on meeting them. They do not smoke before their elders. There is a considerable amount of fellow-feeling in the village. On the occasion of a death one representative from every house in the village will as a rule attend, and will bring a piece of wood to help in making the funeral pyre. When a marriage occurs each household will send a woman to help in grinding the grain for the feast, and cooking and eating vessels will readily be lent to the family which is celebrating the marriage. At sowing and harvest time the cultivators help each other so that each man may get his work done in reasonable time. Those who receive assistance give their helpers food in the evening. The village proprietor has one day's work from each plough with cattle and ploughman. The villagers will subscribe for the marriage of a poor girl

in the village if it cannot be performed otherwise, and especially for the daughter of a poor Brāhman. Sometimes a foreign Brāhman wanders through the District collecting subscriptions for the marriage of his daughter in her own country. The villager is very superstitious. If any one falls ill in the house, he vows to have a recitation of one of the sacred books, especially the *Satya Nārāyan*, a collection of poems in praise of Nārāyan or Vishnu, or to feed virgins or offer *sīdhās* or a present of wheatflour, salt, *ghī*, vegetables and spices to Brāhmans, or to make an offering of the water of the Nerbudda to Mahādeo's temple at Bāndakpur in Damoh on the day of Shivrātri. In the last case some member of the family must make a pilgrimage to the temple, or if no one can go, an outsider must be hired to do it. If he has amassed some money he will undertake a pilgrimage to the great temple at Mathurā or Brindāban or to Jagannāth in Orissa or to Allahābād. If a person falls ill on a Tuesday, it is thought that he is sure to die ; similarly to sneeze when a sick man lies down on his bed, or is drinking any medicine is most unlucky. The *Panchak* or the period of five *nakshatras* or sidereal days in each month is very unlucky. During this period nobody occupies a new house or begins any important business. If a man dies during these five days it is thought that he will cause the death of four other members of the family, and to avert the misfortune four small human figures are made of gram-flour and carried out and burnt with the corpse. The upper stone of the hand-mill is also thrown away on the outskirts of the village. If a man dies on a festival day it is lucky for him, as he will go straight to heaven, but it is unlucky for his family, who must cease the observance of that festival. A corpse must not be burnt during the night, or it will be born blind in the next birth. It is also very unlucky for a child to be born during the *Mūl* asterism or *Nakshatra* (one of the 27 *Nakshatras* or astronomical periods of 15 days). Such a birth may cause the death of one of the child's grandparents or in the worst case that of its father, and elaborate rites of purification are gone through to avert the omen, while for the rest of the

period the husband and wife practise various rules of abstinence. Some women will not have sexual intercourse during the period, as they think that if they do a child will be born to them in the same period.

LEADING FAMILIES.

Brāhman and Lodhī families.

62. Although Brāhmans are the largest landholders in the District, they do not include many families of note. One of the best-known is the Marāthā Brāhman family of Tendūkhedā, whose present representative is Lakshman Rao. His grandfather was an officer in the Peshwā s army, and his uncles were Farnavīs and Dīwān in the Chānwarpātha and Tendūkhedā parganas. The family is now a very large one and has fallen into straitened circumstances. They hold 8 villages. Another notable family of Deccani Brāhmans are the Telang proprietors of Barmhān. They settled in the District about the end of the 18th century, but the fine estate of 25 villages which they now hold was acquired by the late representative Ganesh Pandit, who had extensive money-lending transactions. The proprietor of Singhpur, Rai Bahādur Seth Tīkārām, is a Mārwāri or Palliwāl Brāhman ; he owns about 13 villages and has banking transactions. His son Motī Lāl has the title of Rai Sāhib. The only Hindustāni Brāhman proprietors of any importance are the Jijhotia Brāhmans of Kandelī, who have shares in 22 villages. Of Lodhī families, that of Imjhirā is the most important. The present representative is Rānī Saraswatī, widow of Rājā Bahādur Bhānu Pratāp Singh. In 1857 Sūrat Singh and Manbodh Singh, Bhānu Pratāp Singh's father, rendered good service by resisting an incursion of the Saugor mutineers, for which they were rewarded with the title of Rājā Bahādur together with presents of a sword, gun and dress of honour and a grant of Rs. 5,000, and of 13 villages in the Saugor District on an assessment of half of the land-revenue for two generations. The period of remission has now expired and the villages are fully assessed. The late Bhānu Pratāp Singh left no issue

and his widow married his cousin, by whom she has children. She owns 9 villages in Narsinghpur as well as 13 in Saugor and 3 in Bhopāl. Other important Lodhī families are those of Chaudhari Pulandar Singh of Bāsanpāni and of Chaudhari Pyāre Lāl of Hirkī Piparia. The former owns 6 or 7 villages and the latter 5. Both are in good circumstances and advance seed-grain to their tenants.

Gond Families.

63. The Gond families, though historically the most important in the District, are as a rule not prosperous. The Chīchli family, now split up into two branches, is one of the oldest. They claim to have come from Mandlā several centuries ago and to have received a jāgīr or estate of 80 villages. About 1700 A.D. two brothers who were then at the head of the family effected a partition, the elder taking 40 villages to the left and the younger 40 to the right of the Chītārewā river. The elder retained the ancestral home at Chīchli and the younger made his headquarters at Gangai, a place within a mile of Chīchli on the opposite bank of the Chītārewā. The Chīchli family is now represented by Rājā Bijaya Bahādur, and that of Gangai by Rājā Dolan Singh. Bijaya Bahādur's father Nizām Shā rendered good service to Government in 1857, and in return was presented with a sword of honour and a grant of Rs. 1,200. Apparently also the title of Rājā, which had been conferred on the family by the Mandlā dynasty, was ratified by the British Government. The estate afterwards became heavily involved partly through Nizām Shā's extravagance, and subsequently through the mismanagement of Khet Singh, an illegitimate son of his, who administered the estate for Bijaya Bahādur and Randhīr Singh, the sons and successors of Nizām Shā. The estate was taken under the Court of Wards in 1896, but was relinquished in 1904, as the management was not successful in reducing the debt; the encumbrances at the date of relinquishment were Rs. 1,40,000. Bijaya Bahādur received a sanad at the Delhi Darbār of 1877 and was invited to the one held in 1903. The Gangai branch of the family has been not less conspicuous for its

loyalty than that of Chīchli. Dalganjan Singh, the great-grandfather of the present proprietor, did good service to Government both in the Bundelā rising of 1842 and the Mutiny of 1857. The revenue on his estate was reduced by Rs. 1,000 for two lives, and he also received a sword of honour and Rs. 1,200 in cash. He was succeeded by his grandson Fateh Singh who, though blind, managed his estate well and carefully. Hākim Singh, the successor of Fateh Singh, indulged however in reckless extravagance and incurred heavy debts, in consequence of which the estate was taken under the Court of Wards in 1895 and is still (1905) administered by it; one village has been sold in part payment of the debt which still amounts to Rs. 80,000. Hākim Singh died in 1901 and was succeeded by his brother Dolan Singh, the present Rājā. Rānī Ratan Kunwar of Fatehpur in Hoshangābād is related to the Chīchli and Gangai families. She holds 30 villages in the Gādarwāra tahsīl and 54 in Hoshangābād District. Several of her villages are held by inferior proprietors. The estate is managed by the Court of Wards on her behalf, but is not indebted. Another Gond family is that of Madanpur which is at present represented by the three widows of the late proprietor Dīwān Nizām Shā. This gentleman also gave valuable assistance during the Mutiny and was rewarded with the grant of the estate on half of the revenue for two generations, receiving also a sword of honour and a present of Rs. 2,000. The estate, which is involved and mortgaged to Rājā Gokul Dās, is at present (1905) under the Court of Wards. Pitehrā, a village which has recently been transferred from Saugor to Narsinghpur, is the head-quarters of another important Gond estate, principally lying in Saugor. The ancestors of this family were driven out of Deorī by the Marāthās and awarded the Baleh *tappā* or subdivision of 53 villages, subsequently augmented by another grant to 104. During the minority of Rājendra Singh, the late proprietor, the estate was managed by the Court of Wards and a considerable sum was handed over to him on his coming of age. This he dissipated and again plunged the estate into debt,

so that the Court of Wards has been forced to resume its management. Rājendra Singh left a widow, Rānī Chandra Motī, who has adopted, with the sanction of Government, a boy named Indrajit Singh. The estate has recently been foreclosed by the mortgagees Azīmullā Khān of Saugor and Banshī Lāl Abīrchand. The Dilehrī estate consisting of 24 villages belongs to another Gond family which is related to that of Pitehrā. The estate was originally given free by the Bhonsla Rājās as a bribe to the ancestors of the family to refrain from predatory incursions into their territories. After the cession the revenue-free grant was resumed. The Rājā of Dilehrī was presented with a gold medal for his fidelity and good conduct in the disturbances of 1842-43, and also behaved loyally in the Mutiny. The present holder of the estate is Rānī Tāra Motī, whose husband, Ratan Singh, died recently. The estate is slightly indebted. The Hathnāpur Gond family is also an ancient one, having held their estate from the time of the Mandlā Rājās ; according to their own traditions their ancestors immigrated from Chhattīsgarh several centuries ago. The grandfather of the present proprietor, Rājā Sangrām Sā, gave assistance to Government during the Bundelā insurrection and at the time of the Mutiny, and received a suitable reward. The family formerly had 15 villages, of which 7 have been lost, while the remainder of the estate is heavily involved and was till recently under the management of the Court of Wards.

Other families.

64. Among Rājputs, Thākur Vishwanāth Singh of Mānegaon and Thākur Mānsingh of Pipariā are the leading proprietors, both being Honorary Magistrates. The Mānegaon family are Parihār Rājputs and emigrated from Ajmer in the beginning of the nineteenth century. They have 12 villages in Narsinghpur and 5 in Seonī. Thākur Vishwanāth Singh is a charitable man and is reported to give *sadāvart* or grain enough for one meal to everyone who begs for it. The Piparia family formerly had a much larger estate, but have come down in the world ; a sword of

honour was awarded them for services rendered at the time of the Mutiny. The Jāt family of Narsinghpur dates from about the beginning of the eighteenth century, and according to their own tradition played a leading part in the history of the District prior to the cession. They resisted the Pindāris and were rewarded by the Bhonslas with the title of Rao and the command of 100 foot and 50 horse. The town of Narsinghpur is named after the temple of Narsingh, built by the grandfather of the present proprietor Rāo Sheobaran Singh, who has recently come of age. During his minority the estate, which consists of 18 villages, was managed by the Court of Wards, and was still somewhat heavily involved when it was made over to him. The Karapgaon Jāt family have 21 villages, several of which are held by inferior proprietors. The present representative is a widow, Rānī Bhagotī, who is related to Sheobaran Singh. Among Baniās Rājā Gokul Dās of Jubbulpore has about 30 villages in Narsinghpur tahsīl and 10 or 12 in Gādarwāra. Msst Harī Bai, widow of Seth Narbadā Prasād of Gādarwāra, a Mahesrī Baniā, owns 26 villages and is very wealthy. Seth Ghāsi Rām of Gādarwāra, who is the father-in-law of the last mentioned lady, has an estate of about the same size. The Kalār family of Singhpur own about 30 villages and are large moneylenders. There are five brothers, all of whom except two have separated their estates. The Gosain Mālguzār of Sītādhāna has 18 villages, but is indebted and does not manage his estate well. He is a celibate and the succession goes to his *chelā* or adopted disciple. The leading family among the Kurmīs is that of Kandelī, which owns some 12 villages. The Vidur family of Bhaterā, though in possession of only a small estate, is of some historical note. Their ancestors came from Berār and took service in the Marāthā armies, in which they held fairly high commands.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE.

SOILS.

General nature of soils.

65. The bed of the Nerbudda valley consists of deep black soil, flanked at the base of the hills on either side by bands of the more recent sandstone detritus, and scoured away along the river-banks by the action of drainage. The boundary line of the sandy tract is fairly well marked by the presence of the mahuā tree (*Bassia latifolia*) which seems to flourish particularly in this soil. The soil of the valley is that known as black cotton and, though alluvial, is considered to be formed from trap rock, mixed probably with decaying vegetation. Originally it may be supposed, the materials of the subsoil were brought down by the Nerbudda from the basaltic hills of Mandlā, in accordance with the geological theory that the valley was once a basin, and was filled up by the deposit of sediment by means of the river. It is noticeable that the proportion of sandy soil becomes greater going from east to west, and this progressive increase corresponds closely with the gradually expanding area of sandstone hill which is the southern wall of the valley. 'From this rich central deposit,' wrote Sir C. Grant, 'wheat is taken year after year without any 'attempt at relieving it either by manure or by a system of 'rotation. But though its annual tribute is unfailingly 'rendered year after year, it is useless to deny that the 'powers of the soil have deteriorated under so constant a 'strain. The average return of wheat is 6 maunds or about '8 bushels per acre, being not more than four times the 'seed sown. Captain Sleeman, writing in 1824, said that in

'1807 land newly broken up in Narsinghpur yielded from 15 'to 20 returns. That after 20 years' uninterrupted tillage 'the returns of the same land had sunk to from five to 'eight-fold, but that in the adjoining districts belonging to 'Bhopāl and to Sindhia lying on the other side of the 'Nerbudda, the returns were at the time of his writing 'equal to those recorded in Narsinghpur in 1807, and that 'many cultivators had thrown up their lands because they 'only yielded nine-fold.' As the return when he wrote (1864) had according to his own calculations fallen to four-fold, Grant concluded that the land was gradually deteriorating though at a constantly decreasing rate, the return having dropped only one-fold during the period of 40 years between his time and Sleeman's. The period which has since elapsed has shown happily that Sir C. Grant's belief was entirely erroneous. It is doubtful whether his own statement that the return was only four-fold was correct, as he himself placed the outturn at 6 maunds or 480 lbs.; the quantity of seed sown to an acre is at present 100 lbs., and there is no reason why it should have decreased since 1864; this therefore would give a return of nearly five-fold. The standard outturn of wheat in 1893-94 was 660 lbs. or over 6½ fold on 100 lbs. of seed; and the land would consequently appear to be more fertile than in 1864. The people still neither manure nor irrigate the land, and they still grow wheat year after year without rotation; but they now almost invariably mix a proportion of gram (*Cicer arietinum*) with the wheat, and this has the effect of increasing the fertility of the land, in consequence of the well-known property possessed by plants of the pea tribe of attracting nitrogen from the soil. Grant does not mention this system of mixing the crops, though he remarks that when the soil showed signs of complete exhaustion, gram or another pulse was usually substituted for wheat for two or three years. Whether the admixture of gram is the sole or main cause by which a decrease in the outturn has been prevented cannot be determined here.

Fertility of the soil.

66. The most striking fact about the cultivation to the ordinary observer is the comparatively poor harvest given by a soil of so great a supposed fertility, which aroused the enthusiastic admiration of Settlement Officers coming from Northern India. Grant speaks of it as 'This famous soil.' Mr. (Sir C.) Elliott, the Settlement Officer of the adjoining District of Hoshangābād, wrote: 'But the 'feature which will most distinctively be impressed on his '(the traveller's) memory will be the immense fertility of 'the valley, and the great plains of wheat which seem to 'stretch into immeasurable distance around him. They are 'often interrupted by jungle and hill and are never really so 'unbroken as they seem to be; for a reference to the map 'will frequently show that much of the land is untilled, 'though the eye is too much attracted by the wheat to 'notice the intervening fallows; but in many parts of the 'District the traveller can stand where, for ten miles in 'every direction, he sees nothing but one waving illimitable 'mass of wheat. The paucity of population tends to 'increase the illusion, for the villages are so small as 'to occupy very little space in the landscape, and, as is 'almost always the case, where the forest has but lately 'been cleared away, the clearing has been done too 'completely, and there are too few trees left to shade the 'villages, or to break the monotony of the view. But with 'all deductions and allowances made, the traveller's first 'impression is substantially correct—that he is standing in 'the richest and most fertile valley in India. The cultiva'tion may be rougher and less careful than elsewhere; 'but this is the only soil in the world which will bear wheat 'crops for forty years in succession without a fallow and 'without manure. The produce per acre may be less than 'in higher cultivated countries, but there is no part of India 'which exports so much wheat absolutely, and probably 'none which exports so much per head of its cultivating 'population, none that is where an equal amount of labour 'creates a larger produce. Of the many Districts to which

'the title of 'The Garden of India' has been given, none 'perhaps deserve it better than Hoshangābād.' The statements concerning the amount of surplus produce and of exports in the above quotation rest on the authority of the writer of the 30 years' Settlement Report (1865), and no opinion can be given as to their accuracy at the time they were made or at present. But, in view of the above description, it is interesting to note that while the wheat crop in the Nerbudda valley where 100 lbs. of seed are sown to the acre only yields a return of six or six and a half fold, in the shallow black soil of Wardhā and Nāgpur only 56 lbs. of seed are required for an acre, and the crop is 580 lbs. or ten-fold. The explanation may lie in the fact that the cultivators of the south having a poorer natural soil to deal with have been compelled to assist it by better methods of rotation and the employment of superior implements; the saving in seed has, for instance, been attributed to the use of the *tifan* or three-pronged sowing-drill, though it is doubtful whether this could be worked in the heavy land of the Nerbudda valley. In the same manner the Gūjars of Nimār finding that their scanty sprinkling of earth on a sheet of trap rock will not grow wheat without irrigation, have learnt to irrigate it. [1] It is undoubtedly the case that the soil is better tilled in the Wardhā valley; it receives here ten or twelve ploughings instead of six, owing to the lighter rainfall and the greater industry and skill of the Deccani cultivator; and the difference in the prepared fields is quite extraordinary. The Wardhā valley soil is not so sticky and is better drained than that of the Nerbudda valley, and is therefore less liable to rot the seed. The introduction of better methods of cultivation has been found to give a very much better yield at the Government Farm at Hoshangābād.

Embankments.

67. The question of how far the produce could be increased by the use of manure and irrigation, and especially by the embankment of fields, has for the last few

[1] The remainder of this paragraph has been furnished by Mr. Low, Director of Agriculture.

years received much attention in the Agricultural and Irrigation Departments. Grant found that at the time of his settlement fields were only embanked in the tracts adjoining Jubbulpore, where this system of wheat cultivation has been highly developed; he anticipated that the practice would gradually extend to the west of the District; but this anticipation was not fulfilled and in the 30 years which elapsed between the settlements of 1863-64 and 1893-94 the area of embanked fields was not appreciably increased. It seems difficult to suppose that there is no underlying cause for the absence of embanked fields in Narsinghpur other than that of the apathy of the cultivators, which has sometimes been assigned for it, when the peasants of Narsinghpur belong to the same castes as those of Jubbulpore, and may reasonably be held to possess an equivalent modicum of intelligence and industry. Another curious fact is that though the embankment of wheat fields is commonly considered to have the most valuable results in increasing and securing the crop, yet the standard outturn of wheat in Jubbulpore as given by the Settlement Department is 640 lbs. an acre or twenty pounds less than in Narsinghpur. Some further mention of this subject will be made later in this chapter in treating of irrigation.

Classification of soils.

68. The soils recognised in classification at Mr. De Brett's settlement were *kābar*, *mund*, *patarua*, *sahrā*, *ritua*, *bhatua* and *kachhār*. *Kābar* is the best black soil occurring on level land and in shallow depressions, and containing very little admixture of sand and pebbles; any pebbles which occur in it being usually of a black colour. It cracks deeply when dry and splits up into very hard clods; the broken surface having a glaze. The clods when wetted have an oily feel. *Kābar* was divided into two classes of first and second quality, land which was double-cropped being put into the first class. Apparently therefore *kābar* I is the only soil in the District bearing double crops, though in view of the practice in other Districts it can scarcely be supposed that they could not be grown on second-class *kābar*, and first-

class *mund*. *Mund* is also black soil but contains an admixture of sand and generally limestone pebbles (*chun-kankarī*). It is better suited for wheat than for gram. It was also divided into two classes according to the amount of sand and limestone grit which it contained. The two classes of *kābar* soil cover 16½ and those of *mund* 40 per cent. of the cultivated area. *Patarua* is the soil next in importance. It is in reality very poor *mund*, that is to say, *mund* from which the finer soil particles have been washed away. It is generally found on uneven or raviny ground and is of a much lighter colour than *mund*. Good *patarua* can grow wheat, but it is usually under autumn crops. This soil forms 27 per cent. of the cultivated area. *Sahrā* is the light coloured sandy soil found below the hills; it is well-suited for rice and (with irrigation) for sugarcane and vegetables; it forms 11 per cent. of the cultivated area. *Ritua* is an inferior and more sandy soil than *sahrā*. It is generally found in the beds of rivers where it grows melons, but only a few thousand acres were classed under this soil. *Kachhār* is good land situated on or below the banks of a river or stream and overflowed during the rains; it can produce wheat as well as *bhatā* and other vegetables. Only good soil was recorded as *kachhār* and it covers the small area of 3,500 acres. *Bhatua* is poor soil occurring on or near hills and is of a reddish colour and mixed with stones; it can only produce kodon, kutkī and similar crops. It covers 4 per cent. of the cultivated area.

Classification according to crops grown.

69. In the case of each field it was further recorded whether it could or could not grow wheat, and whether it grew garden crops. Three classes were thus formed of wheat, minor crop and garden land. No field was included as wheat land unless it had actually grown wheat. Land which can grow wheat is practically always cropped with it as often as possible, and is rendered considerably more valuable by the fact that it can bear this crop. Out of the whole cultivated area

365,000 acres were classed as wheat land, 298,000 as minor crop and 12,000 as garden land. The wheat land consists of *kābar*, *mund* and a little *patarua*, and the minor crop land of second-class *mund* and the inferior soils.

Position classes.

70. Land was also classed according to its position, and the advantages or disadvantages attaching to it. In the case of wheat land, in addition to the name of the soil the following distinctions were recognised : *dhongar*, if the field was high-lying and damaged by drainage; *bharkīla*, if it was cut up by water-channels ; *ujarhā*, if it lay at a distance from the village and the crop was damaged by wild beasts ; *bandhia*, if it was embanked with a small bank ; *bandhān*, if embanked with a large bank; *abpāshi*, if irrigated ; and *māmūli*, if it did not fall into any other position. Garden land was divided into two classes according as it was irrigated (*abpāshi*) or unirrigated (*barāni*), and each of these classes was again divided according as it grew either sugarcane or maize and vegetables. The whole of a plot appropriated to the production of sugarcane in rotation with other crops was classed as a sugarcane garden and not merely that part of it which was under sugarcane in any one year. The greater portion of the garden land area consists of little unirrigated plots close to the tenants' houses in which are grown vegetables, maize and tobacco. Land lying near the village site and manured by its drainage or in other ways was entered as *geunrā* to whatever class it belonged. With this exception, no details were entered in the case of minor crop land.

Soil-units.

71. Under the soil-unit system a relative numerical factor of value was assigned to each soil and this was raised or lowered according to the advantages or disadvantages of position, and also according to the class of land. Thus *mund* soil would be more valuable if it could grow wheat and would have a higher factor. The following statement shows the relative factors of value of the different

classes of soils and the proportion in which they were raised and lowered for each position:—

	Wheat Land.				Minor Crop Land.	Garden Land.	
	Ordinary.	Dhongar and Bharikla.	Bandhia.	Bandhān and Irrigated.		Unirrigated.	Irrigated.
Kābar I	38	30	38	50	24		
Do. II... ...	36	28	36	48	20	32	48
Mund I	32	26	32	42	20		
Do. II... ...	24	20	24	32	14		
Patarua ...	18	14	18	28	10		
Sahrā	18	14	18	28	8	20	26
Ritua	(Not found under wheat)			...	6		
Bhatua					3		
Kachhār ...	40	...	...	...	14	32	48

For land lying within the area which receives the drainage of the village (*geunrā*), the factor which would otherwise be used was raised by 25 per cent. in the case of the *kābar* and *mund* soils and by 50 per cent. in the case of the inferior soils. For land classed as *ujarhā*, that is liable to be overrun by wild animals, the factor which would otherwise be used was lowered by one-third. *Bandhia* fields or those in which a small embankment had been thrown up, were valued at the same rate as ordinary fields. In most cases such banks are made to prevent the scouring away of the soil by surface drainage, and the field might be considered to be embanked, not to utilise a natural advantage but to counteract a natural disadvantage. For this reason and also because it was important to encourage the erection of banks no extra factor was imposed. The factors for embanked and irrigated wheat land were also fixed at a favourably low rate

with a view to encouraging the development of the system of embankments. A considerable difference was made in the valuation of wheat fields of first and second class *mund*, and fields cut up by water-courses or lying on a slope were rated much lower than those in the ordinary position. There was also a marked difference in the factors for fields which could and could not grow wheat. In the case of unirrigated garden land the position is of more importance than the soil and only two factors were therefore fixed, one for the best classes of soil and another for inferior classes. These gardens are usually situated within the *geunrā* area, and in that case the factor for the best soils was raised by 25 per cent. and that for the poor soils by 50 per cent., as poor soils benefit more from manure than rich ones. For irrigated garden land also only two factors were used, 48 for the good and 36 for the poor soils with a 25 or 50 per cent. increase respectively if the gardens were within the *geunrā* area. Under the soil-unit system each unit of the soil factor is called a soil-unit, and the factor represents the number of soil-units contained by one acre of the soil. The average incidence of the rental on one soil-unit is ascertained by dividing the rental of the whole village by the total number of soil-units contained in all the fields. This figure is called the unit incidence; it is then raised by the proportion in which the rental is to be increased, and the revised figure is termed the unit rate. This multiplied by the soil factor of each field gives the deduced rent of the field according to the new scale of rental. It will thus be seen that the soil factors express the exact relative values of the soils as ascertained at the settlement.

STATISTICS OF CULTIVATION.

72. [1] Of the total area of the District 249 square miles or 13 per cent. are included in Government forest, 146 square miles or 7 per

Area occupied for cultivation.

[1] The statistics given in this paragraph are for the year 1903-04. The area taken here is that arrived at by the cadastral survey, *viz*. 1,977 square miles. It exceeded the area of the professional survey by 57 square miles at Mr. De Brett's settlement (1893-94).

cent. are classed as not available for cultivation, and 460 square miles[1] or 23 per cent. as culturable waste other than fallow. The remaining area amounting to 1122 square miles or 7 lakhs of acres and forming 57 per cent. of the total or 65 per cent. of the village area excluding Government forest is occupied for cultivation. There has been a slight decrease in the occupied area since Mr. De Brett's settlement (1891-93) when the proportion was 67 per cent. on the area available, being 69 per cent. in the Gādarwāra as against 64 per cent. in the Narsinghpur tahsīl. In the centre of the District cultivation is very close, particularly in the Gādarwāra tahsīl, the Bohāni group having 85 per cent. of the total area occupied, and Nandner 86, while in the Narsinghpur tahsīl the percentage is 89 in Muglī, 84 in Karelī-Kandelī and 79 in Chhindwāra. In most of these groups such culturable land as is still left lies along the banks of the Nerbudda or other rivers, and is not good enough to be brought under the plough except for the poorest crops. In the central part of the District there is no scope for the extension of cultivation, nor is it probable that much land can be won in the groups along the banks of the Nerbudda, the figures for which are Jhānsīghāt 60, Hiranpur-Sānkal 53 and Chānwarpātha 75 per cent. In groups situated in the forest country, the percentages of occupied area are much lower, but though considerable quantities of waste land still remain here, the bulk of it is of little or no value. In spite of the impetus given to agriculture by the construction of the railway through the District, and the great rise in the prices of agricultural produce since the 30 years' settlement (1863-64) Mr. De Brett found that the area occupied for cultivation in the jungly groups had extended comparatively little. The percentages of area occupied in 1891-93 were Bachai-Kathotia 51, Dilehrī-Gorakhpur 47 and Mohpāni 39; the increase in the first group during the previous 30 years had been 22 per cent. and in the other two groups less than 20 per cent. It does not seem possible that any large area cap-

[1] Excludes old fallow which is included in occupied area.

able of growing crops for export can be brought into cultivation in this tract. The Gonds, if their numbers multiplied, might take up more of the hillsides for the growth of the poor autumn millets, but this would not appreciably increase the value of the cropping, and on the other hand would entail a shrinkage of the forest area, and the District could ill afford to lose any part of its forests.

Fallows.

73. In 1903-04, 130,000 acres or 18 per cent. of the occupied area were under old and new fallow. There has been some increase in the land left fallow since 1891-93. The area under resting fallows is naturally larger in the hill and forest tracts where the soil is poor than in the fertile open plain. Here fallows are avoided as much as possible. A part of the holding is often kept waste to grow grass for the cultivator's cattle, but the rest is cropped year after year if it is good land ; for if left fallow there is every probability that *kāns* grass (*Saccharam spontaneum*) will spring up and render the field unfit for cultivation for many years—the period varying with the richness of the soil, as the better the land the longer will the *kāns* flourish.

[1] It is always liable to take hold of the soft soils found in the Nerbudda valley and on the Vindhyan plateau, and when once firmly established is difficult to eradicate. The local method of sowing the autumn crops broadcast and hand-weeding them is partly responsible for its spread. Embankment of land tends to get rid of *kāns* though it is doubtful whether the water actually rots the grass, and it seems more likely that the increased facility of working the plough is responsible. *Kāns* is far more hurtful to the spring than to the autumn crops, while its presence in rice fields is comparatively unimportant. Its presence is injurious both owing to the difficulty of ploughing and to the absorption of moisture from the soil by its thick and succulent roots. As the Narsinghpur soil is as a rule much harder than the *mariar* and *morand*

[1] These sentences were supplied by Mr. Low, Director of Agriculture.

of Hoshangābād and the friable *mund* of the Vindhyan plateau, the grass is not so much feared here as in those districts and the Narsinghpur cultivators do not think it will appear so long as the field is kept under careful cultivation. If they wish to reclaim land already under *kāns* they proceed to plough and replough the land and destroy the weed as far as possible, raising such crops as they can during the first two or three years. Sometimes a cultivator will willingly take up land overgrown with thick *kāns*, under the stipulation that he should pay no rent in the first year, half in the second, and full rent in the third. Mr. De Brett relates the following incident:—'I also made an 'experiment on the *kāns* growing in the compound of my 'house at Narsinghpur. The weed was luxuriant there and 'showed no signs of exhaustion, but as I wished to get rid 'of it, I allowed a Kurmī cultivator to plough it up, and 'provided him with seed, promising him for his trouble half 'the outturn after deducting the seed-grain, which was what 'he asked for. The result was that the *kāns* grass decreased 'markedly and a fair crop was obtained even in the first 'season. The cultivator was well satisfied with his share 'for he was anxious to secure the land on the same terms 'for the following season, and assured me that he would 'practically annihilate the *kāns* in about two more seasons. 'This man had no extraordinary resources at his disposal. 'He was a small cultivator, with ordinary bullocks and 'implements, but by hard work he was quite successful in 'his attack on the weed.'

Cropped area.

74. The gross cropped area was 610,000 acres in 1903-04 as against 650,000 at Mr. De Brett's settlement. This last was almost the maximum figure ever recorded. The statistics of the 30 years' settlement given in Mr. De Brett's Report differ largely from those contained in the report of the settlement itself. According to Mr. De Brett the cropped area at the 30 years' settlement was 567,000 acres while that given in the settlement report is 546,000 acres. According to the former figure the increase

in cropping during the currency of the 30 years' settlement was 10½ and according to the latter 15 per cent. In any case the increase was comparatively small, most of the good land having been taken up at the previous settlement. The main changes during the period were a large expansion in the acreage under til and masūr (lentil) which were only grown to an insignificant extent in 1863-64; a considerable increase under linseed, the acreage of which rose from 2000 to 10,000; and an increase of about 50 per cent. in the acreage of rice. On the other hand, the area under cotton fell from over 70,000 acres to 17,000; the 30 years' settlement having coincided with the American War, which induced a very heavy demand for Indian cotton. It is noticeable that the recent period of high prices between 1901 and 1903, due to the short American crops, has not caused any striking increase in the cultivation of cotton in Narsinghpur, in contradistinction to the Wardhā valley, where its effects have been most marked. The area of wheat and gram taken together did not present any marked variation at the two settlements. The acreage of sugarcane fell off largely. The cropped area fell off by 40,000 acres between Mr. De Brett's settlement and 1903-04, the lowest figure being touched in 1898-99 and 1899-00, in each of which years the cropped area was under 560,000 acres. About half of the ground lost during the famines had thus been recovered in 1903-04. In this year 22,000 acres were double-cropped, the net cropped area thus being 588,000 acres. The maximum double-cropped area was recorded in 1895-96 with 35,000 acres. This figure must probably be in part attributed to re-sowings on account of the failure of the rice crop. The usual method of double-cropping is to sow a catch crop of rice in embanked fields in the rains, followed by gram in the cold weather. The rice crop is put down to make use of the rain-water held up by the embankment and to occupy the land until it is ready to be ploughed for the spring crop. The rice is sown broadcast and little trouble is taken with it.

75. In 1903-04 wheat covered 174,000 acres or 29 per cent. of the cropped area, gram 112,000 or 18 per cent., kodon-kutkī 60,000 or 10 per cent., til 50,000 or 8 per cent., rice 35,000 or 6 per cent., cotton and masūr (lentil) each 32,000 or 5 per cent., juār 21,000 or 3½ per cent., tiurā 18,000 or 3 per cent., bājra 14,000 or 2 per cent., and linseed 7000 or 1 per cent. The corresponding figures for the settlement of 1893-94 were wheat 238,000 acres or 37 per cent., gram 91,000 or 14 per cent., kodon-kutkī 70,000 or 11 per cent., rice 34,000 and juār 33,000 or 5 per cent. each, masūr 24,000 or 4 per cent., til 21,000 and cotton 17,000 or 3 per cent. each, and linseed nearly 10,000 or 1½ per cent. In 1893-94 the autumn crops accounted for 239,000 acres or 37 per cent. of the cropped area, and the spring crops for 408,000 acres or 63 per cent. In 1903-04 the area under autumn crops was exactly the same, while that of the spring crops had decreased to 371,000 acres, the respective proportions being 39 and 61 per cent.

Statistics of crops.

CROPS.

76. Wheat (*Triticum sativum*) has always been the staple crop of the District, its acreage in former years having been over a third of the whole cropped area. The maximum acreage recorded was 246,000 in 1893-94. It decreased to 92,000 acres in 1896-97 when much of the land was too dry to be sown. Five varieties are locally distinguished, and named *pissī*, *jalāliyā*, *kathia*, *bangasia*, and *dhanā*. *Pissī* is the small soft yellow wheat grown for export. *Jalāliyā* is a large yellow grain somewhat harder than pissi and is preferred by native consumers, and *kathia* is a hard reddish and bearded grain and is less liable to injury than the others. *Bangasia* has a dark-coloured beard when standing in the fields, and its grains are also tipped dark. *Dhanā* is so called because its seeds are rounder than the others, resembling those of coriander. It is not often sown.

Wheat.

Pissī is the commonest variety and next to this *kathia*. To prepare the land for wheat the field is gone over three or four times with the *bakhar* or surface plough between May and October. The seed is sown towards the end of October or in November if the rains are late. After sowing nothing more is required until the harvest, which takes place in March and April. Wheat is generally grown in unembanked fields, and in that case the usual course is to mix with it a proportion of gram varying from 12½ to 25 per cent. This is done because gram helps to keep up the productive power of the land, the scientific explanation being that plants of the pea tribe increase the fertility of the soil in which they are grown by assimilating nitrogen through the roots. The mixture is also in favour because the cultivator hopes to secure a fair outturn from at least one of the crops. The addition of the gram increases the productiveness of the wheat sown with it, and the outturn of wheat mixed with gram in the proportion of 18 per cent. will be only 15 per cent. less than that of wheat sown alone. In embanked fields wheat is sometimes grown in rotation with a double crop of rice followed by gram, but the mixture of wheat and gram known locally as 'birrā' is also commonly found here. In Gādarwāra the crop of mixed wheat and gram alternates with masūr (lentil), tiurā, or gram sown alone. After the harvest the grains of wheat and gram are separated by passing them through a net made of hemp or grass which catches the gram and allows the wheat to pass through. Wire netting is also used. Wheat is very liable to suffer from rust in Narsinghpur owing to the heavy rainfall and the retention of moisture by the deep black soil. It is not often injured by frost or hail. *Kandua* or smut which turns the ears black is also a rare disease. Nor is damage often caused here by white ants, which attack wheat in a dry year in other Districts. The crop is sometimes attacked by an insect called *katā* which eats the young plants and by another called *saunr* which destroys the roots. The seed sown to an acre of wheat is 100 lbs. and the standard outturn is 660 pounds or over 6½ fold.

77. Gram (*Cicer arietinum*) is the second crop in importance. The maximum acreage recorded under it was 152,000 in 1894-95 and the minimum 70,000 in 1897-98. Three varieties are grown in the District called *pīra*, *jhumkaiyā* and *parbatia*. *Pīra* has a yellowish or reddish grain ; *jhumkaiyā* is yellowish, smaller than pīra, and has two pods on each stalk, hence deriving its name from *jhumkā*, a cluster ; *parbatia* is a whitish grain and is sown in small quantities ; it is so named because it was first imported from Pārvatīpur in Ganjām. A new variety, called *malīda*, with a larger grain has recently been introduced. The preparation of land for gram is the same as for wheat, but it can be grown with less careful cultivation and in inferior soils. It is generally sown and reaped a fortnight before wheat. It is grown mixed with wheat and in rotation with wheat, and in the Gādarwāra tahsīl in rotation with cotton and juār. 60 lbs. of seed are sown to the acre and the standard outturn is 640 lbs.

Gram.

78. Linseed (*Linum usitatissimum*) though a valuable crop is uncertain and exhausting to the soil. The area placed under this crop has varied from about 5000 to 20,000 acres. There are two varieties, white and copper-coloured, the white seed having a white flower and the copper-coloured a blue flower. The white variety gives a slightly better oil. For the above reasons the crop is not very popular and its cultivation is somewhat spasmodic. It is peculiarly liable to rust and a tenant will seldom risk more than a small area under it. Rusted linseed has a bright scarlet colour. In recent years til has largely come into favour at the expense of linseed, as it is more easily and cheaply grown and less liable to injury from bad weather. Linseed is sometimes sown on the borders of wheat fields as cattle avoid it. The land is prepared in the same manner as for wheat, though less carefully, and the seed is sown at the same time and ripens a little before wheat. It is usually sown in furrows, and occasionally broadcast. 15 lbs. of seed

Other spring crops.

are sown to an acre on an average, and the standard outturn is 280 lbs. Linseed is very liable to injury from rust, and also from frost and suffers from the attacks of caterpillars. The other spring crops are the pulses masūr or lentil *(Ervum lens)*, batrā *(Pisum arvense)* and tiurā *(Lathyrus sativus)*. Masūr has considerably increased in popularity in recent years, the maximum area devoted to it having been 54,000 acres in 1895-96. At the 30 years' settlement (1863-64) it was hardly grown at all. The crop is sown and reaped at the same time as gram, and its outturn is usually affected in the same manner. It requires a heavy soil retaining moisture and a more careful tilth than gram. About 60 lbs. of seed are sown to an acre and the outturn is about 360 lbs. Batrā is of two varieties with white and black seeds. This crop is generally grown in damp ground, and not more than 3000 acres are usually devoted to it. Tiurā covers between 10,000 and 20,000 acres. Both tiurā and batrā are sown and reaped at the same time as gram.

Autumn crops—Rice and Kodon.

79. The area under rice has varied between 26,000 and 70,000 acres since 1891. It is grown as a catch crop in the best embanked fields of the *havelī* villages to occupy the land until it can be prepared for the spring crops, but the outturn is usually poor. It is also grown in the *sahrā* soil at the foot of the hills, very often as a mixture with other crops, as juār and arhar, which require an entirely different system of cultivation, and the fields are not even embanked to hold up water. Little trouble is taken generally over rice cultivation and the land is not irrigated or manured. The crop is sown broadcast and is weeded twice. The seed sown in an acre is 120 lbs. and the standard outturn is 700 lbs. of unhusked, yielding 420 lbs. of husked rice. The grasshoppers which attack rice in a dry year are called *ghullī* in Narsinghpur. Kodon (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*) and kutkī (*Panicum psilopodium*), the small grass-like millets, occupy between 60,000 and 80,000 acres. They are mainly grown in the forest tracts by the poor Gonds, and though the crop is of no commercial importance, its failure will cause

distress among the labouring classes. Kodon is frequently mixed with juār and the pulses, urad, mūng and arhar. The crop is liable to be injured by the *agia* plant (*Striga lutea*). 15 lbs. of seed are sown to the acre and the standard outturn is 350 lbs. of unhusked, yielding 195 lbs. of husked grain. Kutkī is usually sown separately in rotation with gram or the inferior oilseeds. The later crop is grown in Narsinghpur, the seed being sown in August and the harvest coming at the end of October.

Til, juār and cotton.

80. The popularity of *til* (*Sesamum indicum*) has steadily increased in recent years, and in 1902-03 it covered 66,000 acres. There are three varieties with black, white and reddish-black seeds, of which the two former are grown in the rains and the latter as a spring crop. The white and reddish-black varieties are the most common. The flowers are either white or pink and occasionally dark red. In 1902-03, 28,000 acres were under the rain crop varieties and 38,000 under the reddish-black or *maghelī tillī*. The rain-crop is sown in June and July and reaped in October and November, and the winter crop is sown in August or September and reaped in November and December. Til is sown in poor soil in rotation with kodon-kutkī and jagnī. It is sown very sparsely, from 2 to 6 lbs. of seed only being required for an acre, while the standard outturn is 200 lbs. *Ramtillī* or *jagnī* (*Guizotia oleifera*) is another oilseed grown on a small area. It covered 2000 acres in 1902-03. It has a yellow flower and grows 3 or 4 feet high like a small sunflower, the crop when in flower being very picturesque. The outturn per acre is about 150 lbs. Juār covers from 30,000 to 50,000 acres. It is sown in rotation with arhar, gram and cotton and frequently as a mixture with them. The cultivation of juār has not become so popular in Narsinghpur as in the adjoining District of Hoshangābād, probably because the heavy rainfall of Narsinghpur is unfavourable to its cultivation in deep black soil. 25 lbs. of seed are sown to an acre and the outturn is 450 lbs. Cotton was largely grown in Narsinghpur at the time of the 30 years' settlement (1863-64),

the demand in the English market caused by the American war having operated to extend its cultivation. In 1864 the crop was grown on 100,000 acres. In describing a village, Grant says in his Settlement Report:—'On one side of the 'house are generally piled up large mounds of white cotton on 'raised platforms, which stand out as landmarks from afar.' It then declined, and since 1891 the largest area under it has been 42,000 acres in 1892-93. A good deal of cotton is grown on the light undulating soil of the villages along the banks of the Nerbudda river, but much of it is sown mixed with other crops. As in the case of juār, the heavy black soil of the plain is too damp for it. Cotton is not grown in regular lines with an occasional row of tūr as is the custom in the Nāgpur country, but is put down at haphazard, and the outturn is usually poor. The variety grown is of a short staple and is very inferior, being suited only for the coarsest kind of yarn. Cotton is often sown in rotation with gram and is always mixed with arhar, urad or mūng. 15 lbs. of cotton mixed with 2½ lbs. of arhar are sown to an acre, and the outturn of cotton is 200 lbs. yielding 60 lbs. of cleaned cotton. Another fibre grown is *san*-hemp (*Crotalaria juncea*) which covered 10,000 acres in 1902-03. It is a profitable crop, but most Hindus object to cultivate it, probably on account of the dirty nature of the process of beating out the fibre. It is generally grown by the caste of Mallāhs.

Miscellaneous crops.

81. The autumn pulses are arhar, urad and mūng. Arhar (*Cajanus indicus*) covers about 8,000 acres. It is sown in June or July and reaped in March or April. It is always grown as a mixed crop, and very little seed is required. There are two varieties with whitish and reddish grains. Urad (*Phaseolus radiatus*) and mūng (*Phaseolus mungo*) are similarly sown as mixed crops with juār, til, cotton, or arhar. They are sown at the beginning of the rains and reaped in October or November. They cover about 2,000 acres. Among minor crops may be mentioned *bājra* (*Pennisetum typhoideum*), a small millet grown in

kachhār soil or in rotation with cotton and juār. It covers some 15,000 acres. *Sawān* (*Panicum frumentaceum*) is another small millet grown as a first crop in embanked fields and reaped in August. *Kangnī* (*Setaria italica*), the Italian millet, is also grown. This millet yields a good fodder, but is most advantageous for this purpose if cut when in flower. Castor, brinjals, yams, coriander, chillies and carrots are grown in gardens. Betel-vine plantations cover about 25 acres. *Al* or Indian madder (*Morinda citrifolia*), whose roots yield the well-known red dye, was a comparatively valuable minor crop at the 30 years' settlement, but is now in little demand, as it has been driven out of the market by aniline dyes. A little *al* is still grown for local consumption. It provides a dye which is said to keep off insects and moths, and *al*-dyed cloth is therefore commonly used by moneylenders to keep valuable papers and accounts in, and by cloth merchants to protect their cloths. About 1000 acres were under tobacco in 1903-04. The cultivation of sugarcane has fallen off and is now unimportant. In 1863-64 it occupied about 5000 acres, but the area under it has decreased to 1000 or less. Since the railway has been opened the local *gur* or unrefined sugar has been undersold by that imported from Northern and Western India which can be retailed at a substantially cheaper rate. The reasons are said to be the inferiority of the pressing machines and the wasteful methods of refining in the Central Provinces. In many villages a considerable number of disused stone-crushing mills can be seen, where now perhaps not an acre of sugarcane is grown. The finer kinds of cane which were grown for eating have been ousted, and practically the only one now produced is a small variety which can be grown without irrigation. This is cultivated in the 'ritua' soil of the Gādarwāra tahsīl.

Implements and methods of agriculture.

82. The implement principally used in cultivation is the *bakhar* or surface plough. This has an iron blade some 20 inches long and 4 inches wide which is dragged across the ground horizontally and goes two

or three inches deep. It is called *pāns*. The *bakhar* is used in preparing the land for rain crops twice if possible before the setting in of the rains and twice afterwards. The seed is sown broadcast and a heavy beam of wood is dragged across the land to cover in the seeds and break the clods. For the spring crops somewhat more trouble is taken. The *bakhar* is used once or twice in the open season and about four times before the conclusion of the rains when a break admits of it. After this preparation the seed is sown with the *nāri*, which consists of a plough with a sowing tube attached to it, and another plough follows behind marking its furrow a little to one side of the first; the earth thus turned up covers the seed deposited by the first plough. The plough consists simply of a wooden body with an iron spike penetrating 6 to 9 inches. The spike or share is called *kus*. Weeding is done with a *khurpā* or *khurpī*, that is, a straight or crooked blade of iron attached to a wooden handle. *Parenā* is the goad, pointed at one end and with a flat piece of iron at the other to clear off the mud from the plough. Mr. Sly, Settlement Commissioner, wrote as follows on the agriculture of the District[1]:—'The 'cultivation of the wheat and gram crops is most carefully 'carried out by a constant preparation of the fields during 'the rains and by sowing the seed with a drill plough. The 'embanked lands of the *havelī* are an interesting feature, 'whereby some of the fields are kept under water during 'the rains and an early crop of rice is raised from them. 'In the belts of poorer country these rabi crops give 'place to kharīf cultivation, of which the most important 'are kodon, rice and cotton. But the local custom is to sow 'four or even more kinds of kharīf crops as a mixture, the 'seeds being thrown broadcast into the field and then left 'to thrive as best they can with the help of one or perhaps 'two weedings. This rough cultivation cannot compare 'with the more careful methods of the Nāgpur country,

[1] Letter No. 4173/74, dated 17th October 1901, from the Commissioner of Settlements and Agriculture to the Chief Secretary to the Chief Commissioner.

'where kharif crops are sown with the drill and weeded 'by a hoe-plough.' Manure is little used and is applied to the less important autumn crops and to rice. It is at present doubtful how far any advantage is gained by manuring open wheat fields, unless wheat is grown in rotation with an autumn crop. Where a catch crop is sown in embanked fields, manure would be very advantageous, but the Narsinghpur cultivators are not habituated to using it. Owing to the scarcity of wood fuel also, cattledung is in great demand for the manufacture of fuel-cakes.

Total value of crops.

83. The following statement shows the total value of all the crops grown, taking the acreage under each for 1903-04:—

Gross Produce and its Value.

Details of crops.	Area (1903-04).	Standard outturn per acre.	Gross Produce.	Value rate per rupee.	Gross Value.	Value of crop per acre.
	Thousands of acres.	lbs.	Thousands of lbs.	lbs.	Thousands of Rupees.	Rs. a. p.
Wheat	1,74	660	11,50,36	29	39,67	22 13 0
Gram	1,13	640	7,19,90	43	16,74	14 14 0
Rice (cleaned) ...	35	420	1,45,71	21	6,94	20 0 0
Juār	21	450	96,22	53	1,82	8 8 0
Kodon-kutkī (cleaned)	60	195	1,17,92	30	3,93	6 8 0
Til	50	200	99,77	25	3,98	8 0 0
Linseed	7	280	19,13	22	87	12 12 0
Cotton (cleaned) ...	32	60	19,05	4	4,76	15 0 0
Sugarcane (*gur*) ...	1	1,200	8,44	20	42	60 0 0
Other food grains ...	82	320	2,63,43	64	4,12	5 0 0
Miscellaneous food crops	1	320	3,05	64	5	5 0 0
Gardens	3	...	...	...	69	20 0 0
Miscellaneous non-food crops	31	...	...	...	1,52	5 0 0
Total ...	6,10*	...	26,42,98	...	85,51	...

* Including double-cropped area.

The total value of the crops thus comes to Rs. 85½ lakhs. The similar calculation on page 18 of Mr. De Brett's report shows that the value of the crops at the time of last settlement (1891-93) was Rs. 80½ lakhs, so that the value in 1903-04 was slightly larger. In the previous year owing to the fact that the prices of 1902 were considerably higher, the value of the crops was much larger and amounted to Rs. 1·08 lakhs. In this year agriculturists must, therefore, have reaped large profits, and the high level of prices in 1901 and 1902 has gone some way to compensate them for their losses during the famines.

IRRIGATION.

Irrigation.

84. The area irrigated has hitherto only twice exceeded 3000 acres; a maximum area of 3600 acres having been recorded in 1896-97. The crops irrigated are sugarcane and vegetables and the supply of water is obtained entirely from wells. There are practically no irrigation tanks, nor does any part of the rice crop receive assistance. The total number of wells is about 1500 of which some 600 are durable and the remainder temporary. One well irrigates on an average about 2 acres. The average depth of the subsoil water is said to be about 20 feet. Water is drawn from the wells by means of an ordinary large leather bag called *mot* or *parohā*, and occasionally by a *rahat* or Persian wheel. Occasionally fields are irrigated from *bharkās* or pits dug in the bed of a stream, from which the water is raised by a wooden lift called *dhenkī*. Some projects for tanks have been suggested for the protection of part of the rice area. The system of embanking wheat fields to hold up water, which is a feature of the agriculture of the neighbouring District of Jubbulpore, has hitherto made little progress in Narsinghpur. At Mr. De Brett's settlement (1891-93) only 2500 acres of land were recorded as embanked with large embankments and 50,000 as having small embankments. The latter are generally retaining banks at the lower end of a sloping field to prevent the scouring of

the soil by the flow of water, and they are not protective. The large embankments are really a method of irrigation as by holding up water on the field during the early part of the rains, they ensure that the soil will retain sufficient moisture to enable the crop to be sown and to germinate even if the autumn rains of September and October should fail. On the other hand if the winter rains are heavy the crop is more liable to rust in these embanked fields, and this may possibly be the reason why the system has not found much favour in Narsinghpur, where the black soil is heavy and very retentive of moisture and the rainfall is over 50 inches. There are two methods of embanking either by enclosing the field on all four sides, or by building a large bank at the lower end to hold up water, the field being thus converted into a small tank during the rains. For the former system it is essential that the land should be quite level, whereas the latter can be practised on fields having a slight slope. The cost of the embankments works out to Rs. 20 or 25 an acre. During the thirteen years between Mr. De Brett's settlement and 1905 an additional 13,000 acres were provided with large embankments.

CATTLE.

Breeds and Prices.

85. Cattle are bred in the District especially in the hilly tracts towards the south; the local supply is however insufficient for the requirements of agriculture and cattle are imported in considerable numbers from Saugor and to a less extent from Nimār, Seonī, Chhindwāra and Hoshangābād. The Sirmangni breed of Seonī and the Harrai breed of Chhindwāra are well known. A few of the good Sankhā breed from Bhopal are also to be found, but their expense debars most cultivators from using them. The Narsinghpur cattle have no particular reputation. They are fairly large animals generally white in colour and, though slow, have the strength which is requisite for cultivation in the heavy black soil. Bulls are not usually kept for breeding, this taking place indiscriminately from the mixing

of the young bullocks with the cows before castration. Some years ago a bull was kept for breeding purposes by Government, and the people say that some bullocks of a better quality than the ordinary were got from him. This measure has however been abandoned. The price of a pair of bullocks at the age when they are fit for cultivation is about Rs. 60 to Rs. 70, while those of fairly good quality cost up to Rs. 100. Prices have gone up considerably in the last ten years. Bullocks are castrated at 3 or 4 years old and their working life is 7 or 8 years from the time that they are trained to cultivation. As in Saugor and Damoh nose-strings are usually not employed for cart-bullocks in the interior, the only method of control being by a cord passed round the forehead. The people think that the use of nose-strings tends to weaken the animal but this is of course a pure delusion. A cow costs from Rs. 5 to Rs. 20 and gives from two to four pounds of milk a day if she is well fed. The milk of cows is usually drunk, probably because it is not rich enough for the manufacture of *ghī* or melted butter. Cattle are fed on grass and the chaff and straw of all kinds of grain. During the hot weather antl at sowing time cultivating cattle usually get a feed of the pulse tiurā (*Lathyrus sativus*), sometimes mixed with mahuā flowers. Milch cows are given oil-cake and cotton-seed as these foods are rightly believed to increase the supply of milk. Grazing is very scarce in the open country of the *havelī* where cultivation is close, though forests are accessible near at hand for those animals which can be sent away. Many cultivators keep up *bīrs* or hay-fields for their cattle. Cultivating cattle get two chittacks of salt once a week if the cultivator can afford it, and they always receive it during the busy season. Well-to-do mālguzārs give salt to their pet animals twice a week. In 1903-04 the District contained 71,648 bulls and bullocks or a pair for every 17 acres cropped. The number of cows was 54,000 giving 56 to a village on an average. The people consider that the numbers of cattle have been greatly reduced by privation during the famine years and also by the cattle-slaughtering industry which has

lately sprung up. In some respects no doubt the decrease is advantageous as infirm and worthless animals are weeded out and more pasturage is left for the rest. If however the statistics of plough cattle, which are somewhat difficult of compilation, are correct, a deficiency in numbers certainly seems to exist.

Buffaloes.

86. Buffaloes are kept by all classes but are not used for cultivation. The cows are kept for the production of *ghī* from their milk, while the young males are disposed of cheaply to the caste of Basdewās who drive them in herds to Chhattīsgarh and dispose of them there at remunerative prices. Barren cows and sometimes young bulls are used as pack-animals for the carriage of grain and *ghī*. A cow buffalo gives from 4 to 8 pounds of milk a day according to the quality of the food she receives, and costs from Rs. 20 to Rs. 60. A buffalo in calf gives milk for a year and is then dry for another year, the interval for a cow being 8 or 9 months. The number of cow buffaloes in 1903-04 was 23,000. The keep of buffaloes is expensive on account of the high price of fodder grass and the scarcity of grazing, especially in the Gādarwāra tahsīl.

Ponies.

87. Ponies are bred in the District but to a much smaller extent than formerly when every mālguzār who could afford it kept a pony for riding. But still the District possesses a larger number of fairly good animals owned by the native population than most others. An enquiry conducted by the Superintendent of the Civil Veterinary Department in 1903-04 showed that 713 animals above 13 hands in height existed in Narsinghpur, as against 533 in Saugor and 456 in Damoh. Ponies are generally imported from Rājputāna. In 1903-04 the District contained a total of 6,200 horses and ponies, giving 6 to each inhabited village, and this was the highest average in the Province. A stallion for breeding purposes was until recently maintained by Government but the results obtained were very inadequate and it has been decided to discontinue this measure.

The impoverishment of many landowners and the construction of good roads have at the same time rendered horse-breeding too expensive a luxury, and have destroyed the taste for it, the people generally preferring to travel in carts when this method of locomotion is practicable. Carts are also of great assistance in cultivation. Small ponies are used as pack-animals for the carriage of grain and ghī, and these cost only about Rs. 10 each. Stallions are never gelt.

Small stock.

88. Goats and sheep are usually kept by the Gadaria or shepherd caste. No use is made of their manure. Goats are kept mainly for food, and their milk is drunk and also sold to the Halwais or confectioners. Blankets are made from the wool of sheep and are used by all agriculturists. The best blankets are made at Chānwarpātha. In 1903-04 there were 6,400 sheep and 29,000 goats, these figures being high for a Northern District, though small in comparison with those of the Nāgpur country. The Gadarias seem to have settled at an early date in the District, which, when less closely cultivated, was probably rich in pasturage. No less than three villages are called Gadariakhedā, and this was also the old name of Narsinghpur, while two villages have the name of Gādarwāra, which is merely a contraction of the same word. Donkeys are kept only by Gadherā Kumhārs, Khatīks or vegetable sellers, Dhobīs, and Sunkars and Beldārs or masons, and used for the carriage of their stock-in-trade, as grain, lime, bricks and tiles, earth and vegetables. The donkey makes a very good beast of burden and costs about ten rupees. Their milk is not drunk but is sometimes given as medicine to children. The donkey is impure, and no Hindus except those mentioned keep him. He is the animal on which Sītala, the goddess of small-pox, rides. In 1903-04 the District contained about 3,000 donkeys or more than any other in the Province. There are a few mules.

Cattle-disease.

89. The local names of the commoner cattle diseases are *begā* and *baikarā* for foot-and-mouth disease, *sunkā* for pleuro-pneumonia, *ghatsarap* and *bhaonrā* for anthrax, and *parsujā*

and *churkā* for black-quarter, a kind of anthracoid disease which is common in the District. Rinderpest is said to be rare. The commencement of the rains is the most unhealthy time for cattle, as after being half-starved through the hot weather they gorge themselves on the rank, young grass, and cultivating cattle are more liable to succumb to disease than others. The disease of *phansi* or hemorrhagic septicæmia is prevalent at this time, especially in damp and low-lying localities. There are no cattle-fairs, but six weekly markets are held for the sale of cattle at Chhindwāra, Amgaon and Dangīdhāna in the Narsinghpur tahsīl, and at Kaudiyā, Tendūkhedā and Sainkhedā in the Gādarwāra tahsīl.

CHAPTER V.

LOANS, PRICES, WAGES, ETC.

LOANS.

Government Loans.

90. Little action has been taken under the Land Improvement Loans Act in Narsinghpur, and as the people neither practise irrigation nor embank their fields, the scope for it is extremely limited. The total sum advanced under the Act from its enactment in 1883 up to 1903 was only Rs. 13,000, and most of this was given out in the years 1894, 1896 and 1900 when famine or distress was prevalent. During these years loans were given in some cases for the eradication of *kāns* grass, while nearly all the remainder were for the embankment of fields. Practically the whole of the principal and interest due under the loans have been recovered. Between 1895 and 1905, 118 sanads have been granted for improvements, of which 48 were given between 1897 and 1900, 22 in 1902-03 and 19 in 1903-04. The area of embanked fields increased by about 13,000 acres between 1893 and 1905. Very little either was done under the Agriculturist's Loans Act until 1894 when substantial sums began to be advanced and have been given out annually since. During the two years 1899-1900 and 1900-01 Rs. 66,000 were advanced for the famine of 1900. Altogether more than 2 lakhs were advanced between 1892 and 1903, out of which practically the whole amount due for principal and interest has been recovered, Narsinghpur presenting in this respect a marked contrast to most other districts.

Rates of interest on private loans.

91. The rate of interest on private loans is considered to have increased since the period before 1894 and even on the best security, and when considerable sums are advanced money is not now

usually obtainable under 9 per cent. The rate for loans above Rs. 1,000 varies however between 6 and 12 per cent. For loans of small sums below Rs. 1,000 the rate varies between 12 and 24 per cent. It is stated that the credit of tenants has been greatly diminished by the restrictions on transfers imposed by the Tenancy Act of 1898, and in some cases they have had to surrender their holdings owing to their inability to obtain loans. This view however is the one taken by proprietors and moneylenders among whom the provisions of the new Act are unpopular, and it does not afford any reason for the conclusion that its introduction has not on the whole been beneficial to the tenantry. The rate of interest on loans of seed-grain for the spring crops is 25 per cent. and rises to 50 per cent. in the case of borrowers of doubtful stability. For seed-grain for the autumn crops the rate of interest is from 50 to 100 per cent., but these grains are seldom borrowed from the regular moneylenders owing to the small quantity required for sowing, and a tenant who wants seed can usually get it from another tenant. A system is also practised by mālguzārs and petty moneylenders called *bandhewā* or *bandhor*; advances are made to the tenant for his seed-grain or rent, and he is bound to repay the loan in grain at harvest-time at a fixed rate which is sometimes less than half the market rate. This practice has however greatly decreased in recent years. Bills of exchange on Bombay are sold in Narsinghpur, the ordinary rate of discount varying from 4 to 8 annas per cent. for payment at sight.

Principal moneylenders.

92. The largest moneylender in the District is Rājā Seth Gokul Dās of Jubbulpore, who owns 42 villages. The other principal moneylenders in the Narsinghpur tahsīl are Rām Prasād Jijhotia Brāhman of Kandelī, Seth Chobmal Oswāl Baniā of Kandelī, Jagannāth Anandī Patel Jijhotia Brāhman of Narsinghpur, and Rai Bahādur Seth Tīkārām Palliwāl Brāhman of Singhpur, who resides at Narsinghpur. Ganesh Pandit Telang Brāhman of Barmhān has also a considerable moneylending

business and has acquired the village of Sārasdol, reputed to be after Karelī the best estate in the District. The four Kalār brothers of Singhpur, each of whom conducts his affairs separately, have also fairly extensive transactions. In Gādarwāra tahsīl Deokaran Bhagwān Dās of Gādarwāra who is a connection of Rājā Seth Gokul Dās and a Mahesrī Baniā, Msst Harī Bai widow of Narbadā Prasād Mahesrī Baniā who is very well to do, Ghāsi Rām Seth of Gādarwāra father-in-law of Msst Harī Bai, and for some time Vice President of the Gādarwāra Municipality, Nandlāl and Harlāl Kalārs of Sainkhedā, and Chaturbhuj Lakshman Dās Teli of Khuhī are the leading moneylenders. It will be seen from the above list that among the leading moneylenders are almost as many Brāhmans as Baniās. As usual one or two Kalārs have made money and have taken up banking.

Condition of the agricultural classes.

93. At the time of the last settlement Mr. De Brett wrote that both mālguzārs and tenants lived comfortably, and those of the good cultivating castes were well housed and well fed. There were still a good many large tenants left, men who paid some hundreds of rupees for their holdings. There were no doubt many cases of debt, but often the debt was kept up as a sort of running account, the tenant preferring to retain his connection with his banker in order that he might obtain help at time of need. The cultivators and proprietors, alike in receipt of considerable profits from agriculture, naturally yielded at times to the temptations of extravagance. But the rental had little to do with indebtedness, some of the worst cases of which occurred among protected tenants, who had held at low rents from the time of the 30 years' settlement, while ordinary tenants, paying competition rents, had managed to put by money. But though the rent was only a small proportion of the annual expenses of the tenant, the mālguzārs had in the past made those rents fall more heavily on the ryots than they really should by disregarding the proportion in which they were authorised to levy the instalments of rent. It was a common practice to take half

the rent at the time of the autumn crops, even in villages where hardly any but spring crops were grown, and where the prescribed instalment was only one-fourth of the rental. This procedure compelled the tenant sometimes to forestal his harvest unless he happened to have kept a stock of grain in hand from the previous season, and in many cases led him to incur debt. From the time when the export trade in wheat to Europe assumed substantial proportions, that s in about 1880 up till the commencement of the bad seasons in 1893, Narsinghpur with Hoshangābād was the most prosperous part of the Province. The assessment of the 30 years' settlement was extremely light, and all classes reaped large profits from agriculture. Unfortunately they adapted their style of living to their present income, forgetful of two considerations; the first that they could not always rely on good harvests, and the second that the share accruing to Government in the produce of the land had not been fixed in perpetuity. It was no doubt a great disadvantage of so long a term as 30 years having been fixed for the settlement, that the cultivators practically ceased to consider during its currency that a time would come when the revenue would be largely enhanced. And that period coincided with a succession of failures of the harvest, such as for duration and severity had probably never been equalled. Even before 1893 it was known that the cultivators of the Nerbudda valley, while they had reaped the largest profits from agriculture, were also more heavily indebted than those of any other part of the Province. And while their condition was not such that with a continuation of those profits on the same scale they could not have cleared themselves, it yet left them absolutely unprepared to sustain the burden of the bad times which were in store for them. Notable instances had nevertheless occurred during the 30 years' settlement of the reduction of debt by careful management. Mr. De Brett mentions that the Lodhi mālguzār of Kuklah had reduced his liabilities from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 10,000. Similarly the Lodhi proprietor of Narwāra had managed to pay off Rs. 21,000 out of a debt of Rs. 25,000 by careful management and the

avoidance of extravagance. The cultivators of the open valley and the hill tracts may be said to form two different classes. The former were very prosperous up to 1893. They were extravagant and easygoing, and though their habits of life were simple, the effects of years of frugality would be nullified by the celebration of a single marriage. The least sum that they would spend on a marriage would be Rs. 50, while the expenses would often mount as high as Rs. 250. The better class of tenants were not very severely affected by the famine, except that they lost their stocks of grain. But the poor tenants of the hills had no reserve of supplies to fall back on. Many of them lost their holdings and had to descend to the rank of labourer, while the rest were hampered by the want of seed-grain and cattle. The largest decrease in cultivation is in the hilly tracts. The bad harvests of 1893-94 and 1894-95 exhausted the grain-stocks of tenants and forced them to borrow. Rental arrears which had previously been scarcely known began to accumulate from the latter year. The following two years made matters still worse, and proprietors and tenants alike were unable to replace their worn-out plough cattle, or to purchase the considerable quantities of wheat required for seed-grain. Arrears of land-revenue now began to accumulate. But the litigious temper of the proprietors and tenants still induced them to waste money in rent suits, whose ultimate result was to cause loss to them both. Since 1901 a marked improvement has been visible in the condition of the agricultural classes. Many tenants have nearly recovered a solvent position. The cropped area has increased and the cultivation of the valuable spring crops has resumed normal proportions. Much land had been overgrown with *kāns*, but some of this was cleared by Government agency in the famines, and loans have been granted for the reclamation of other areas. Taken as a class the tenants have suffered less severely from the famines than the proprietors, whose debts secured by bond and mortgage must remain a permanent burden for some years to come.

Transfers of villages

94. The figures of transfers of immoveable property from 1894-95 show sufficiently the period of trial through which the proprietary class has passed. Mr. De Brett states[1] that during the 30 years' settlement, 164 entire villages, 19 mahāls and 66 shares of villages changed hands. It is not quite clear what number of entire villages these figures represent, but 200 is probably a fair approximation, as when shares of villages are transferred the average share is less than 8 annas or half a village. In that case as the number of villages was 1,110 at Grant's settlement and is 1,124 at present, the transfers would amount to about 18 per cent. of the total, which is about equivalent to the proportion of transfers during the currency of the 30 years' settlement in other Districts. Since 1894-95 up to 1903-04, 259 entire villages and shares aggregating 143 more have been transferred. The total number of villages transferred thus amounts to 402 or more than a third of the total number in the District in ten years. These figures are a sad indication of the extent to which the old proprietors have lost their estates. The transfers have however been by no means entirely from agriculturists to moneylenders. The total number of transfers, taking each share separately, was 997. Of these 124 were made by moneylenders, 724 by agriculturists and 149 by others. 384 transfers were made to moneylenders, 462 to agriculturists and 151 to others. Moneylenders have therefore gained by 260 transfers or nearly a third of the total number. A comparison of the numbers of villages held by different castes at Grant's settlement and at present does not however show any very striking change in the classes of proprietors. Adding up the villages given in Grant's statement,[2] we find that they come to 1,110, while that in the statement furnished from the District shows 1,240. In the latter statement therefore the mahāls of perfectly partitioned villages must have been shown separately. This however does not seriously impair

[1] Settlement Report, p. 28, para. 69.

[2] Statement No. 2 of 30 years' Settlement Report.

the value of the comparison. The statements show then that Brāhmans held 231 villages at the 30 years' settlement and 308 at present. They have therefore gained by about 70 villages. It has already been seen that some of the leading moneylenders are Brāhmans and this increase may therefore be put to the credit of the moneylending class. Baniās hold 122 villages as against 58 in 1863-64, an increase of about 60. They have nearly doubled their landed property, but still hold only a tenth of the District area. Gonds now hold only 141 villages as against 206 in 1863-64, and have therefore lost more than 60 or nearly a third of their estate at that time. But for Government protection and management of the estates of large Gond landlords they would now have scarcely a village left. Jāts are another caste whose villages have decreased from 65 to 36. The other agricultural castes have not materially altered their position. Rājputs and Kurmīs have lost a few villages and Kaonrās and Kirārs have gained a few. Lodhīs and Gūjars hold practically the same number of villages now as then. It may be noticed that Kalārs now hold 47 villages as against only 2 in 1863-64, Telīs 26 as against 19, and Gosains 41 as against 36. Kāyasths have lost a few villages, the figures being 41 at present as against 48 in 1863-64.

PRICES.

Course of prices of the staple crops.

95. The most important crops of the District are wheat and gram, the former being grown however to a greater extent than the latter. During the early part of the century prices were extraordinarily low. In 1821, three years after the cession, wheat sold as low as Rs. 2-8 per *mānī* of 4 maunds, or 64 seers (of 2 lbs.) to the rupee, and gram for Rs. 1-8 per *mānī* or about 107 seers to the rupee. As late as 1849 wheat sold in Gādarwāra at 53 seers per rupee and gram at 80 seers. At this time, however, the price of wheat at Narsinghpur was 40 seers and a distance of 30 miles was thus sufficient to produce a difference of 33 per cent. in prices. There was scarcely any foreign trade, and it was impossible to get a good average rate of

prices for the District as a whole ; a local scarcity in Mālwā might have doubled prices at one end of it, while at the other end grain might be selling for little or nothing. In 1862 prices were affected by the American War and rose very suddenly, wheat in that year selling for 19 seers per rupee. Between 1865 and 1870 the rates became still higher consequent on the demand arising from the American War and the Bundelkhand famine of 1868. This period was succeeded by a slight fall, but another sharp rise was occasioned in 1878 by the famine in the North-Western Provinces, the Deccan and Madras. The decade, 1880-90 saw the development of the export trade in wheat to Europe, and in 1888 and 1889 the bad harvests caused a further rise. The rates prevailing until shortly before the 30 years' settlement were thus never again experienced. The following statement taken from Mr. De Brett's Settlement Report shows the quinquennial rates of prices between 1861 and 1891 :—

	Seers per rupee.	
	Wheat.	Gram.
Four years 1861—1864	25·45	34·28
Five years 1865—1868	17·57	18·86
Do. 1870—1874	20·28	22·43
Do. 1875—1879	17·86	22·03
Do. 1880—1884	19·18	29·77
Do. 1885—1889	16·47	23·37
Two years 1890—1891	14·24	19·70

Mr. De Brett concluded that the rise in rates between the period preceding the 30 years' settlement and the years immediately previous to the settlement of 1891-93 might safely be taken as 66 per cent. or from 25 to 15 seers per rupee in the case of wheat, and 70 per cent. or from 34 to 20 seers per rupee in that of gram. At the settlement of

1864 a rate of Rs. 6 per māni was taken as the standard for assessment purposes, this being equivalent to 27 seers per rupee, and according to this standard the rise in the price of wheat would be nearly 75 per cent. A comparison of rates shown in some accounts of leading mālguzārs from 1860 onwards showed that the increase in the rates of gram in the interior was 65 to 68 per cent. If the year 1860 be included for the purpose of computing rates at the 30 years' settlement, the increase would be even larger, as this was the last year of the very low prices prevailing prior to 1861. Taking these figures into consideration, it seemed reasonable to put the rise in the price of wheat at 70 per cent. and in that of gram at 60 per cent. during the period of the 30 years' settlement. If these percentages are combined according to the approximate relative importance of the two crops (the area under wheat bearing usually to the area under gram the proportion of 46 to 15), the combined increase in the price of both staples was 67 per cent.

Prices of other grains and miscellaneous articles.

96. In the famine of 1900 juār was taken as a staple food-grain of the District, but until within comparatively recent years it has not been extensively cultivated and its price is not quoted in the returns before 1894. It cannot properly be considered as a staple food-grain, and if a cheaper one is needed to combine with wheat for the calculation of famine wages, gram should be selected. The price of kodon was first quoted in the official returns in 1872 when it was 30 seers per rupee. It was next mentioned in 1885 at $17\frac{1}{2}$ seers per rupee, while in 1890 the price had risen to $14\frac{1}{2}$ seers per rupee. According to information afforded by the local lists the increase in price was 33 per cent. during the period of the 30 years' settlement. The prices of linseed and masūr also rose largely or by 69 and 76 per cent. respectively according to these lists. The price of wheat assumed at the settlement of 1891-92 was 15 seers per rupee, but except in one year it has never been so low since. In 1891 the price was 13 seers, being still apparently influenced by

the poor harvests of 1888-89. It fell to 15 seers in 1893, after which the recent cycle of bad years commenced. During the following years it rose gradually to 8·3 seers in the famine of 1897; it declined to 12 seers in 1899, and rose to 9·2 seers in 1900. After this year it again fell gradually to 14·3 seers in 1903, this being the lowest point touched since 1893. Juār was 22 seers in 1894, 12 seers and a small fraction in 1897 and 1900, and 29½ seers in 1903. Gram was 18½ seers in 1891; it rose to 9 seers in 1897 and 10 seers in 1900, and fell again to 19½ seers in 1903. The price of cotton was very high in 1863-64 when rates had been forced up by the American war, and cleaned cotton fetched a rupee for 3lbs. It subsequently fell largely when the European demand declined. During the years 1887—91 the average price of cleaned cotton was 5½ lbs. per rupee. Since that period the rate has varied between 4 and 6½ lbs., the highest price of 4lbs. being recorded in the years 1894—96. The highest price of linseed since 1891 was 6·3 seers in 1902 and the lowest 11·7 seers in 1898. The price of salt averaged about 9 seers during the decade ending 1901 and fell to 10·3 seers in 1903. Rice is always expensive in Narsinghpur, as the amount grown locally is insufficient for consumption. The cheapest rate in the last twelve years was 11·2 seers in 1891 and the dearest 7·5 seers in 1897. The price of ghi is from 2 to 2½ lbs. per rupee. 'Gur' or unrefined country sugar is sold at 20 lbs. per rupee immediately after it is prepared, and for 16 lbs. a little time afterwards. Imported 'gur' is sold 2 lbs. cheaper than country 'gur'. It comes from Meerut, Cawnpore and Lucknow. Grass is sold at from 1,000 to 2,000 *pūlas* per rupee.

WAGES.

Statistics of wages.

97. According to the official returns the published rates of wages during the years 1891-93 were, with small variations, Rs. 4 for an ordinary agricultural labourer and Rs. 12 for a common mason, carpenter or blacksmith. Farm-servants and field-labourers are still commonly paid in

grain with various small perquisites in addition to their wages, but the cash equivalent works out to about Rs. 4 a month.

Farm-servants.

98. The farm-servant is known as *harwāha*. He is engaged either by the year or for six months, the former arrangement being known as *pakkā-din* and the latter as *katchā-din*. Frequently farm-servants are engaged for 8 or 10 months and are not employed from July to September, as the cultivator does not require them after the land has been ploughed for the spring crops until they have to be sown. A tenant who has 12 or 14 acres of land will usually keep one farm-servant and employ extra labour at sowing and harvest-time. The grain wages of farm-servants vary from 3½ to 5 *mānis* a year, the *māni* being equivalent to 4 maunds or 320 lbs. Besides this the farm-servant is given a pair of shoes, a blanket and a *mirzai* or waistcoat of cotton cloth, or in lieu of it a pair of *dhotīs* or loin-cloths. In some villages a plot of land of about 2/5ths of an acre, is sown for the farm-servant, the seed given being 4 kuros or 40 lbs. During the period that sowing lasts the farm-servant is given two double handfuls or a pound of grain daily, and at harvest-time a sheaf or 2 lbs. Large mālguzārs also give each farm-servant a present of 80 or 100 lbs. of grain on the conclusion of the harvest. If paid in cash the rates are Rs. 3 or 4 a month and the above perquisites. The rates of cash payments have increased in recent years from Rs. 2 a month formerly paid. Taking the average grain and cash payments and including the value of perquisites, both work out to about Rs. 48 a year. Recently labour has been scarce in the District, and it is stated that farm-servants were in a position to stipulate for cash or grain payments as they preferred in 1903. The farm-servant stays in the field all night during the time that sowing is proceeding and from the time that the crop comes into ear until it is removed to the threshing floor. Generally he will sleep at home only for 8 months in the year. During the rains he takes cattle to graze in the jungle from the time that the autumn sowings are

finished until the spring ones begin. The cattle are taken either to the Saugor or Chhindwāra hills lying on each side of the *haveli* or plain of the Nerbudda valley, and when there is a break the plough-bullocks are sent for. Farm-servants are generally indebted. Gonds and Ahīrs are the castes principally employed. Gonds make the best farm-servants as they are not afraid to stay in the fields at night and are also honest. The wives of farm-servants work as casual labourers and collect grass and fuel for sale. A large landowner keeps a head farm-servant who is called *chirohī* and usually receives one rupee a month extra.

Other agricultural servants.

99. The grazier is called *charwāha*, and is paid Rs. 2 or Rs. 2-8 a month. A mālguzār usually keeps a private *charwāha* or two or three if he has a large number of cattle. Tenants send their cattle to graze in charge of their children, if they have any of suitable age, while there are some public graziers for the village, who are paid at monthly rates for the cattle entrusted to them. Another agricultural servant is the *gobarwāli*. She is usually a woman and is paid Rs. 1-8 or Rs. 2 a month. She cleans the cattle-stalls and collects the manure and makes cowdung cakes of it in the dry season. In the rains she places ashes or dry earth in the stables. Only mālguzārs usually keep a *gobarwāli*, the wives of tenants doing this work for themselves.

Field labourers.

100. The daily wages of casual labourers in towns were in 1901 from 2 to 2½ annas for men, and 1½ annas for women. In the interior they are a pice or two less. At sowing and harvest-time wages go up owing to the demand for labour, and a man will then receive 4 annas a day. The contract rate for harvesting is one sheaf in every twenty cut. For weeding, labourers are only paid from 5 to 7 pice a day because they work only from ten till five, taking their food before going out to the fields. *Rakhwāli* or watching the crops is paid for at the rate of 4 or 5 *kuros* or 40 or 50 lbs. of grain for each *māni* of seed-area, that is for

2½ to 3 acres. In villages in the open country the crops need only be watched after they have come into ear. One man is usually employed by the village to scare off the black-buck. The usual wages for grain-grinding are 4 pice for 10 seers and 3 pice for 9 seers in the hilly tracts. Mālguzārs pay 5 pice for ten seers, because they want their grain ground finer. For cutting fields of grass the wages are one rupee for every 2,000 or 3,000 bundles, the grass being left where it is cut, and brought home by the owner. The payment for cutting grass thus amounts to more than half its selling value. Earth-work is measured by the *dangnī* which is a patch of 5 by 5 by 1 cubits. The rate of payment is one rupee for 5 or 6 *dangnīs* or from 425 to 500 cubic feet. The rates of payment for daily labourers have risen somewhat since 1891, but not more than in proportion to the price of grain. Gonds and Chamārs are the poorest classes and form the majority of field-labourers. Many of the Gond tenants have only a small garden plot for spade cultivation and live principally by labour. They depend much on their earnings at harvest-time, and when they see that the grain is ripening, they come down to the plains in large numbers, leaving their villages in many cases entirely deserted, and offer themselves as reapers. If the harvest is a good one, they will not give up reaping even to take work on the railway at 8 annas a day, for the whole family can work at reaping and even the blind do their share. Should the harvest be a light one however, the Gonds will not accept payment in kind, but demand a daily wage in cash. A certain number also get employment in the coal mines at Mohpāni. Here wages are good and the work not unpleasant, as the mines are not of any great depth. And in this work too their women and children can take part without danger or discomfort and add considerably to the family earnings.

Village servants.

101. Excluding the kotwār and patwāri, who now receive fixed stipends in cash, there are several village artisans and servants who are paid in kind by cus-

tomary contributions from the villagers. The village Lohār and Barhai, or carpenter and blacksmith, get 3 or 4 *kuros* or 30 or 40 lbs. of grain each per plough of two bullocks for repairing the iron and wooden implements of agriculture. They also receive a *dhulī* or sowing-basket full at seed-time and a sheaf at harvest-time. This comes to about 6 lbs. extra. The Lohār mends all the iron implements, but must be paid for his labour if he makes new ones, the materials also being supplied to him. New implements are however usually purchased ready-made. The carpenter does all repairs and makes the *hal* and *bakhar* or ploughs if the materials are supplied to him; but he does not make carts without separate payment. Where the villages are small one artisan does the work of three or four. Theoretically the emoluments of the blacksmith and carpenter, as well as of the other village servants, remain the same as they have always been, but, in fact, during and after the famines, they have not received their full dues, and sometimes only a half or a third of them. But having no other means of livelihood they have gone on working, in the hope that with the return of better times, payment will again be made to them in full. There is generally a barber in each village who shaves the ordinary villagers once a fortnight and the better-class men once a week. For this he receives 4 *kuros* or 40 lbs. of grain annually as well as the gifts at seed-time and harvest. The 40 pounds are paid sometimes per plough of two bullocks and sometimes for each adult male in the family, whose hair and beard he cuts and shaves. He is paid nothing for cutting the hair of small children. At marriages the barber usually receives Rs. 10 for each hundred guests, out of which he has to expend Rs. 3 or 4 in the provision of leaf-plates and the distribution of invitations. When a child is born he gets Rs. 1 or 2 as a present, and on account of the services of his wife. When a death occurs he receives 8 annas for shaving the hair and beards of the mourners. The Dhobī or washerman receives from 20 to 40 lbs. of grain a year, according to the number of persons in the family, besides the

extra 6 lbs. at seed-time and harvest, and when he washes the clothes he also gets his food. Ordinary cultivators have their clothes washed by the Dhobī once a fortnight, with the exception of their loin-cloths which they wash themselves daily. Women wash their *sārīs* or body-cloths every day in the good castes and must not take their food till they have done so; among the lower classes the women wash their clothes only once in four or five days. At marriages the Dhobī gets 8 annas or a rupee for washing the clothes of the guests, and at births and deaths he receives 8 annas and 4 annas according as the birth is that of a male or female child, or the death that of a man or woman. The Dhīmar or waterman receives from 4 to 12 annas a month for supplying water to a household. Each village must have a village priest or *Khedāpati*, but one priest does the work of three or four small villages. The Khedāpati is always a Brāhman and can read and write. He does not usually hold land unless it has been granted for the upkeep of a temple. He receives no fixed contributions, but each tenant pays him according to his means or inclination. At weddings he usually receives presents of from 2 annas to a rupee or more. Some of the village priests hold land in the ordinary manner as tenants, and some combine their priestly functions with daily labour. The Khedāpati also goes round begging twice a month on the 15th and 30th days and all the tenants give him something. It is his special duty to carry out 'Pitripaksh' or the worship of ancestors during the first fortnight of Kunwār, or the last part of September. During this time he sits daily on the bank of a tank and repeats *mantras* or sacred verses, while the villagers come and taking water in their hands, pour it on the ground and call upon the names of their ancestors. It is also the Khedāpati's duty to worship all the village gods at festivals.

Expenses of cultivation.

102. The following statement (p. 132) is a rough estimate of the expenses of cultivation of an ordinary holding. The holding is assumed to consist of 25 acres of land, for the cultivation of which four bullocks will be

required. In proportion to the crops grown in the District, the land is supposed to consist of 3 acres of fallow, 9 acres devoted to kharīf or autumn crops and 13 acres to rabi or spring crops; the kharīf area to consist of 3 acres of rice, 2 of juār and 4 of kodon; and the rabi area of 7 acres of wheat, 5 of gram and 1 of masūr or lentil. The cost of kharīf seed-grain according to the prices of 1903 will be Rs. 12-3-3 for 360 lbs. of rice, 50 lbs. of juār and 60 lbs. of kodon, no interest being included; and that of rabi seed-grain Rs. 42-10-10 for 875 lbs. of wheat, 375 lbs. of gram, and 75 lbs. of masūr, allowing interest at 25 per cent. on the amount required. The total cost of seed-grain will thus be Rs. 55. The rent of the land at the rate of Rs. 1-11-7 per acre, the average rent-rate of the District, will be Rs. 43. The wages of labour and payments to village servants will be somewhat as shown on the following page.

Total payments by tenants.

103. The total charges thus come to Rs. 94, which with the rent and seed-grain make up the cost of cultivation to Rs. 192. The value of the outturn of the crops mentioned is rice Rs. 64, juār Rs. 15-8, kodon Rs. 24-8, wheat Rs. 165, gram Rs. 84, and masūr Rs. 7 or a total of Rs. 360. The total cost of cultivation thus amounts to just over 53 per cent. of the value of the harvest, the rent being 12 per cent., the seed-grain 15 per cent, and wages of labour 26 per cent. The tenant's own labour is excluded from computation, and little allowance is made for the assistance of his wife and children; if they work in the fields the cost of labour will be considerably diminished. The calculation also includes the bulk of the expenditure on implements, the amount contributed by the tenant for religious purposes, and his expenditure on the barber and the washerman.

MANUFACTURES.

Weaving and dyeing.

104. The cotton industry supported about 15,000 persons in 1901 as against 20,000 in 1891. The decrease is principally among cotton-spinners and cleaners and is due

Particulars of Tenants' payments.	Payments in kind.	Payments in cash.
	lbs.	Rs. a. p.
Village priest	6	...
Lohār (blacksmith)	46	...
Barhai (carpenter)	46	...
Nai (barber)	46	...
Dhobī (washerman)...	36	...
Chamār (shoemaker)	6	...
One farm-servant engaged for a whole year at Rs. 3-8 a month	...	42 0 0
A blanket, a pair of shoes and a cloth for the farm-servant	...	3 0 0
His perquisites in grain	106	...
One Bokā or coolie for sowing engaged only at rabi sowing time for 10 days at 2 as. per day	...	1 4 0
One grazier for six months at 4 as. per month for 4 bullocks	...	1 8 0
Forest grazing dues of 4 bullocks when the Harwāha takes them into the jungle for 4 months after kharīf and before rabi sowings.	...	0 4 0
Watching of kharīf crops at 5 *kuros* for every one *māni* seed capacity of land. There are 9 acres of kharīf which is equal to 1½ *māni* seed (mixed) capacity	75	...
1st weeding of kharīf crops at 6 coolies per acre at Re. 0-1-6 per day; for 9 acres 54 coolies at Re. 0-1-6 each	...	5 1 0
2nd weeding do. do. ...	...	5 1 0
Kharīf reaping at 5 per cent. of the gross produce 220 lbs. or Rs. 5-4-8	220	...
Rabi reaping at 5 per cent. of the gross produce 409 lbs. or Rs. 12-15	409	...
		58 2 0
Feed of bullocks for two months at 4 seers of *khallī* per day—240 seers at 25 seers per rupee	...	9 10 0
	996	67 12 0

ABSTRACT.

	Rs. a. p.
Total cash payments	58 2 0
Grain payments except for harvesting, 367 lbs. at 43 lbs. per rupee	8 8 7
Harvesting kharīf and rabi ...	18 3 8
Feeding charges of bullocks ...	9 10 0
	94 8 3

to the increased imports of Indian mill-spun thread, and the opening of ginning factories in the adjoining Districts to which the raw cotton is sent to be ginned. In numerical strength the industry ranked ninth among the Districts of the Central Provinces in 1901. The three ginning factories working in Narsinghpur were opened after the census of 1901 and must have caused a still larger decrease in the number of cotton-cleaners. Some 3000 to 4000 maunds of Indian thread are now imported annually from the Bombay and Jubbulpore mills. Coarse thread is still spun for cart covers, quilts, carpets and the *newār*-cloth used for the seats of beds, but thread for weaving cloth is practically all imported. The principal centre of the cotton-weaving industry is Gādarwāra, while Singhpur and Amgaon have also a considerable number of weavers. Korīs, Katias and Mehrās weave coarse cloth, and Koshtīs, who number about 1000 persons, the finer qualities. The Koshtīs generally use dyed thread, and the Korīs and Mehrās dye their own. The weavers get their thread from Baniās according to a system of advances. The bulk of them are in very poor circumstances. Hemp sacking is not produced in the District but is obtained at Barmhān fair. Dyeing is carried on at the villages already mentioned and also at Narsinghpur, Palohā and Shāhpur. The dyeing industry of Gādarwāra was formerly important, and the *razais* or bed-cloths woven and dyed here were sent to Jubbulpore, Nāgpur and Berār. The castes engaged in dyeing are the Rangrezes, who use indigo and other indigenous agents besides imported dyes, and the Chhīpas who dye and print cloths with red alizarine dye and other agents. A few Khatrīs are engaged in dyeing in Narsinghpur. Cloth is now only dyed with safflower to order. A little tasar silk is woven at Narsinghpur and Kandelī but it is of very inferior quality. Woollen blankets are made by the Gadaria or shepherd caste at Chānwarpātha and Khamaria. Those of Chānwarpātha are of good quality and fetch Rs. 3-8 or Rs. 4 each. Numdah cloth is imported and is made up into native

saddles by the Mochīs in Narsinghpur, who are also book-binders.

Metals.

105. In 1901 the District contained over 3000 gold and silver workers, the industry being numerically the seventh highest in the Province. Most villages of any size have one or two houses of Sonārs, and in the towns and large villages there are more. Gold ornaments are usually made hollow and are filled with lac, and frequently have bases of silver. Most Hindus who can afford it give their wives a gold nose-ring and a *timni* or neck-ornament with three beads of gold leaf, which must be used in the *chadhao* ceremony. A *pungaria* or pin for the nose is often also provided. Precious stones are set in the nose-rings of women and the finger-rings of men. Silver ornaments are usually made by hammering, and no great skill is shown in their manufacture. There is a considerable brass-working industry at Chīchli and a smaller one at Nayākhedā. Brass vessels are more commonly used than those made either of copper or bell-metal. Very little unwrought copper is imported and vessels of bell-metal cannot consequently be made in large numbers, though the workmanship of those produced at Chīchli is said to be of superior quality. Bell-metal ornaments are worn by the poorer classes, but they have now taken to imported articles of nickel-silver and gilt. Each village has usually its Lohār or blacksmith, who makes and mends the iron implements of agriculture. There was formerly a considerable iron-working industry at Tendūkhedā and the articles made here had a very high reputation locally. But since the production of iron from the mines has almost ceased, the iron-workers have also fallen on evil days, and the industry is now insignificant. The Lohārs cannot work English iron in their furnaces and they usually buy the metal smelted at Panāgar in Jubbulpore. They make frying-pans, girdles, spoons, pickaxes and large vessels for holding water. The iron utensils made at Panāgar are largely used in the District.

106. The District has a comparatively large number of carpenters. The carpenter is a village servant and makes and mends the wooden implements of agriculture and country carts. A few mechanics in the towns turn out good work and make English furniture. Bamboo-work is done by the Basors, who are also the village musicians. Some of the Basors in towns make bamboo screens and chairs and tables. Māngs make mats and brooms of palm-leaf, and the Kuchbandhias manufacture brushes, stands for vessels, and cord for bedsteads from *mūnj* grass (*Saccharum ciliare*). In Narsinghpur grain is not kept in large baskets but in pits or earthen receptacles. The pottery of the District is of the same rude type as over the rest of the Province. Narsinghpur and Gādarwāra contain a number of Kumhārs or potters, who make vessels in black, red or yellow clay. The Kumhārs also manufacture bricks and tiles, but the thick unburnt square bricks called *chaukā* are made by the tenants themselves ; for tiles, the tenant has the clay prepared by his farm-servant, and the Kumhār then shapes and bakes them. The number of bangle-makers is larger in Narsinghpur than in most Districts. The Kacherās and Sīsgars make glass bangles with balls of crude glass imported from Northern India, and also the glass bottles or flasks, which are used for carrying the water of the Ganges or Nerbudda to be offered at temples. This water cannot be carried in ordinary bottles. The Lakherās make lac bangles, which are worn at marriages and during the month of Shrāwan, and also other ornaments and *chapetās* or wooden cubes covered with lac, which are used as playthings during the month of Shrāwan. The leather-working industry is next to that of cotton, the most important numerically, but the number of leather-workers declined largely during the decade 1891—1901. The Chamārs receive the hides of cattle dying in the village in Narsinghpur in contradistinction to most Districts, where these are primarily the property of the kotwār. They make the *nāri* or thong and *jot* or neck-rope for cattle,

Other industries.

and the country shoes and sandals which are commonly worn.

Factories.

107. Since 1901, three cotton-ginning factories have been opened at Gādarwāra, Chhindwāra and Karelī. The Chhindwāra and Karelī factories belong to Rājā Gokul Dās of Jubbulpore. These were constructed at a cost of Rs. 30,000 to 35,000 each, and employ about 65 operatives during the four or five months for which they work. The wages paid for unskilled labour are 3 annas a day for men and 2 for women. The Gādarwāra factory belongs to a Bohrā merchant of Bombay and the outlay on it was Rs. 47,000. It employs about 80 operatives. The cotton after being ginned is usually sent to the presses at Hardā, and the seed is both used locally for feeding cattle and exported. 3½ maunds of uncleaned yield a maund of cleaned cotton.

Weights and measures.

108. The ordinary grain measures in Narsinghpur tahsīl are as follows :—

One *pao* = 20 tolās.

One *pai* = 2½ *paos* or 50 tolās.

One *kuro* = 8 *pais* or 5 seers.

One *mānī* = 32 *kuros* or 4 maunds.

One *manyāsi* = 100 *manīs* or 400 maunds.

In Narsinghpur and Kandelī another *pai* is used of 18 chittacks or 90 tolās. In that case the *kuro* contains 8 *pais*, and the *mānī* 18 *kuros* or 4 maunds 2 seers. Grain is sold by measurement both in the towns and in the interior. But in Chhindwāra and Karelī, the ordinary Government weights are being introduced. These are the seer of 80 tolās, the *paserī* of 5 seers and the *mānī* of 32 *paserīs* or 4 maunds. Corn is also sold by weight in Gādarwāra town. In the interior of Gādarwāra tahsīl, the measurements are as follows :—

One *pai* = 90 tolās.

One small *kuro* = 4½ *pais* or 5 seers 1 chittack.

One large *kuro* or *sei* = 8 *pais* or 9 seers.

One *mānī* = 18 *seis* or 32 small *kuros* or 4 maunds 2 seers.

This is practically the same measurement as that already mentioned as current in Narsinghpur town. The *sei* or large *kuro* is used in the tracts to the north of the railway and west of the Shakkar river, and the small *kuro* over the rest of the tahsīl. Formerly a small *pai* of 60 tolās was also used in the same tracts as the small *kuro*, so that the *kuro* as usual contained 8 *pais*. But this measure has fallen into disuse. The measures employed are not stamped but are generally made of brass, and are produced at Chīchli. The weights given as equivalents to the above measures of capacity are for wheat, and, of course, they vary for other grains, of which an equivalent bulk may be lighter or heavier than wheat. The area of fields is spoken of in *mānis* of seed-grain and one *māni* of wheat is sown in 2½ acres. This measurement, however, includes the presents given at sowing-time to village servants and others. *Ghī*, sugar, salt and metals are sold by weight. In Narsinghpur tahsīl the ordinary seer of 80 tolās is in general use, but in Gādarwāra a seer of 95 tolās is frequently employed. The latter is called the *pakkā* and the former the *katchā* seer. In the case of gold and silver the tolā in Narsinghpur is equivalent to one rupee's weight and 2½ *rattīs*. One *tolā* contains 12 *māshas* and one *māsha*, 8 *rattīs*. The tolā is therefore equivalent to 1·03 rupees. In Gādarwāra the same tolā is used for gold as in Narsinghpur, while for silver the ordinary tolā equivalent to a rupee is employed.

Fairs.

109. Annual fairs are held at Barmhān, Barehtā and Sānkal and a few other places. The Barmhān fair is an old one and was formerly of greater importance than it now is. Barmhān is sacred as the junction of the Nerbudda and Warāhi rivers, and possesses a number of temples and well-known religious associations. The religious object of the fair is to bathe in the Nerbudda on the festival of Til Sankrānt (12th-14th January). But it is also an occasion for the sale of household and other commodities on a considerable scale. The fair lasts for about a month and is held on the

sands of the bed of the Nerbudda. In 1864 merchandise to the value of six lakhs of rupees was brought for sale to it, of which more than half was actually sold. The principal commodity sold at that time was English cloth, of which more than two lakhs worth was brought to the fair. Lac ornaments and copper utensils were the articles next in importance. In 1892 Mr. DeBrett states that the value of goods brought was Rs. 2·37 lakhs, and that of goods sold Rs. 1·57 lakhs. The crowds of worshippers were enormous, and it is said that in all nearly half a million persons attended the fair, but many of these only stayed one day. There were in all 1,505 shops, 250 of which were those of cloth merchants, 250 of grocers, and 225 of confectioners, while 214 sold small articles of ornament, jewellery, thread and other things. In recent years the business done at the fair appears to have decreased. The number of shops has considerably fallen off to between 200 and 300 in the years of agricultural depression, and 600 in other years. Owing to the famines the fair was not held in 1897, 1898 and 1900. The attendance also appears to have fallen off to 50,000 to 100,000 persons, but it is doubtful whether these figures include all persons present at the fair during the whole period of its duration. A fair is held at Barehtā, 14 miles from Narsinghpur, on the 15th day of Baisākh (April-May) and lasts for about a week. The fair is held in honour of the Pāndava brothers, who are supposed to have sojourned at Barehtā. About 8,000 persons assemble and temporary shops are opened for the sale of merchandise. A fair is also held at Sānkal on the 15th day of Kārtik (October-November), and lasts for about a week. Sānkal is sacred as the junction of the Nerbudda and Hiran rivers. This fair also lasts for a week, and from 4000 to 5000 persons assemble at it. A small fair is also held at Sokalpur on the 15th day of Kārtik (October-November) which has an attendance of from 3000 to 4000 persons. Sokalpur is at the junction of the Shakkar and Nerbudda rivers and is therefore esteemed a sacred place. Temporary shops for the sale of cloth and vessels are established there by the tradesmen of Gādarwāra

and the adjoining villages. Small gatherings for religious purposes also take place at Jhiria, a village about 8 miles from Gādarwāra on the road to Sainkhedā, at the shrine of Devi called Mirhwāni in the village of Bohāni, and at Salaiyā near Shāhpur.

Markets.

110. The principal weekly markets are held at Amgaon, Dāngidhāna and Chhindwāra in the Narsinghpur tahsīl and at Tendūkhedā, Kaudiyā and Sainkhedā in the Gādarwāra tahsīl. Cattle are sold at these markets. The Chhindwāra market is an important one both for cattle and grain and is largely attended by people from Narsinghpur and the neighbourhood. Cattle are brought from Bhopāl, Chhindwāra and Saugor and from 15,000 to 17,000 head are sold annually, the realisations being from one to two lakhs of rupees. The Tendūkhedā and Kaudiyā markets are those next in importance, about 5000 to 6000 head being sold at each of these, of the total value of about half a lakh. At Dāngidhāna between 2000 and 3000 head of cattle are sold annually, while the markets of Amgaon and Sainkhedā are of smaller importance. Iron utensils are sold at the Tendūkhedā market. Numerous other bazars are held, there being 30 in all in each tahsīl. At Chīchli the brass vessels manufactured locally are exposed for sale. Timber and forest produce are brought to the Narsinghpur, Chhindwāra, Gādarwāra and Bābai markets.

TRADE.

Trade in former years.

111. At the time of the 30 years' settlement Mr. Grant wrote that the trade of Narsinghpur was altogether unimportant. The only export of any consequence was cotton. When the withdrawal of the military forces from the valley in 1822 induced so marked a depression of the grain market that it became necessary to look seriously into the remaining resources of the District, it was concluded that the net surplus revenue derivable by Government from

Narsinghpur must depend chiefly if not solely upon this staple. The local cotton, though not of any particular quality, appears to have always commanded a market, for in 1833 the annual exports were estimated at 19,000 maunds. On the outbreak of the American war the area under cotton largely increased in Narsinghpur as elsewhere, and in 1863 it was estimated that it amounted to a sixth of the total acreage under crop. After this period its cultivation greatly decreased. The only trading towns at that time were Narsinghpur and Gādarwāra, and Narsinghpur was apparently the chief centre for the collection and distribution of the District trade, as in 1864-65 its imports were valued at Rs. 9¼ and its exports at nearly Rs. 8½ lakhs. These figures represent probably an amount of trade considerably in excess of that which the town enjoys at present and may be taken to include as much of the traffic with Saugor as then found its way into the District, the importance of Karelī dating from the opening of the railway line. The distribution of foreign necessaries was at that time effected by means of the large fair held at Barmhān. The merchandise brought to the fair in 1864 was estimated by the Deputy Commissioner to be worth about 6 lakhs of rupees, of which more than half found a sale. On the opening of the railway to Jubbulpore from Bombay in 1870, the trade of the District immediately began to expand and the eighties saw the development of the large exports of wheat to Europe, and the rapid increase of the wealth of the District, which was at that time considered to be, with Hoshangābād, the most prosperous part of the Province. From the date of the opening of the railway up to 1889 the produce of the Saugor District was also brought to Karelī station in Narsinghpur, which soon became the most important commercial centre, the Karelī-Saugor road having been constructed in 1877-78. During this period then the figures for Narsinghpur represent the bulk of the trade of two Districts. Statistics of bulk of the principal exports and imports are given in an appendix to Mr. De Brett's Settlement Report. The highest figures were reached in

1885 when the exports were $25\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of maunds and the imports over 4 lakhs. Wheat alone accounted for over 16 lakhs of maunds of exports in this year. As soon as direct railway communication was opened with Saugor in 1889, the export trade of the Narsinghpur tahsīl decreased by 50 per cent. and the import trade by 33 per cent. In Gādarwāra tahsīl also there was a marked falling-off in consequence of the opening of the railway. Notwithstanding this, however, the average annual trade of the District during the period 1889-91 amounted to $14\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs of maunds of exports and $3\frac{1}{3}$ lakhs of maunds of imports, which was double the average of the six years 1871—1876 immediately after the opening of the railway and a still greater increase on the former trade by road. During 1889-91 the average exports of grain were nearly 12 lakhs of maunds and those of oilseeds about 80,000. The imports of salt were about 100,000 maunds, those of sugar about 87,000, cotton piece-goods 8000 and kerosine oil 9000.

Recent statistics.

112. After 1891 no figures of trade are available until 1899; from this year until 1904 statistics have been obtained from the railway returns. The figures relate only to the stations of Gādarwāra, Mohpāni, Karelī, Narsinghpur and Gotegaon or Chhindwāra, but the trade of other stations is insignificant. The exports of grain and oilseeds from the smaller stations may be taken as about 3 per cent. of the total bulk of articles exported from the District. This amount is excluded from the figures of exports given below. The imports to the smaller stations are probably altogether insignificant. The figures for the principal articles of export and import are shown in the statement on the following page, the values being calculated from those given in the Provincial Trade Statistics for the Central Provinces and other Provinces. The statement shows that the trade of the District decreased from 18 lakhs of maunds in 1889-91 to 9 lakhs in 1899 under the influence of the successive bad seasons. It recovered to over 16 lakhs of maunds in 1903 and fell again to 13 lakhs in 1904. The total value of exports in 1903 was

TRADE.

Figures represent thousands.

	1904.		1903.		1902.		1901.		1900.		1899.	
	Quantity in maunds.	Value in rupees.	Quantity in maunds.	Value in rupees.	Quantity in maunds.	Value in rupees.	Quantity in maunds.	Value in rupees.	Quantity in maunds.	Value in rupees.	Quantity in maunds.	Value in rupees.
Exports—	000	000	000	000	000	000	000	000	000	000	000	000
Raw Cotton ...	21	4,37	41	6,96	35	5,28	14	1,57	19	3,55	21	3,14
Wheat ...	3,85	10,72	4,29	11,15	1,64	4,61	66	2,40	73	2,87	1,37	4,57
Other Grain and Pulses ...	3,68	8,21	5,43	11,74	4,32	10,13	2,21	6,35	2,57	7,88	2.58	6,86
Linseed ...	26	89	25	1,06	14	80	23	1,35	8	45	27	1,17
Tilseed ...	36	1,23	1,20	4,56	1,10	6.12	53	2,59	1,88	10,66	1,21	5,23
Hemp ...	28	1 52	55	2,95	21	1,11	55	2,96	23	1,25	8	42
Ghī ...	20	5,24	12	2.71	17	3,76	23	6,50	27	7,71	24	5,41
Other articles value of which is known ...	85	1,74	56	1,15	33	84	61	1,30	57	1,40	27	1,02
All other articles value of which is not known...	39	...	27	...	59	...	36	...	78	...	31	...
GRAND TOTAL ...	10,08	33,92	13,08	42,28	8,85	32,65	5,52	25,02	7.30	35,77	6,54	27,82
Imports—												
Cotton Manufactures ...	16	7,00	16	6,99	14	5,61	14	5,54	12	4,94	12	5,19
Metals ...	12	2,86	12	2,63	7	1,36	5	91	5	79	4	81
Sugar ...	83	6,05	69	4.20	74	3,63	67	4,01	60	4,54	64	4,89
Salt ...	77	2,48	69	2,40	61	2,25	54	2,02	57	2,23	51	1,96
Kerosine Oil ...	23	87	22	78	18	55	17	58	7	36	14	64
Gunny Bags... ...	12	1,13	17	1,46	11	88	6	56	8	77	10	91
Grain and Pulse ...	22	74	10	31	30	96	78	2,60	1,99	7,17	56	1,85
Other articles value of which is known ...	19	1,56	19	1,55	19	1.75	16	1,47	27	2.71	16	1.51
All other articles value of which is not known...	56	...	81	...	56	...	33	...	38	...	29	...
GRAND TOTAL ...	3,20	22,69	3.15	20,32	2,90	16,99	2,90	17.69	4.13	23,51	2,56	17,76

Rs. 42 lakhs and of imports Rs. 20 lakhs, the combined total being Rs. 62½ lakhs. This figure was nearly equalled in 1900 when prices were much higher and the value of the District trade was Rs. 59¼ lakhs, Rs. 23½ lakhs being imports. In 1904 the total value of trade was Rs. 56½ lakhs, the exports of grain, pulse and oilseeds being much smaller in this year.

Export—Wheat and other grains. Oilseeds.

113. In 1903, which may be taken as a fairly representative year, the exports of grain and pulse were valued at Rs. 23 lakhs, those of raw cotton at Rs. 7 lakhs, oilseeds at Rs. 6 lakhs, hemp and jute at Rs. 3 lakhs and *ghī* at nearly Rs. 3 lakhs. These articles made up nearly the whole value of exports. During the last two decades wheat has been the staple product of the District, accounting for from a half to two-thirds of the whole bulk of exports. In 1891, 11 lakhs of maunds were exported. During the bad seasons following on 1893 the exports of wheat shrank into insignificance, and in 1899 only 137,000 maunds, value Rs. 4½ lakhs, were exported, and in 1901 only 66,000 maunds. Since then the trade has recovered, and in 1903 the exports were over 4 lakhs of maunds, valued at Rs. 11 lakhs. Gram and the pulses mūng, masūr and arhar are also exported in large quantities, the figures being 4½ lakhs of maunds, valued at Rs 10 lakhs in 1903, and 360,000 maunds, valued at Rs. 8 lakhs in 1904. These figures are about the same as those recorded in 1889-91. Juār is exported to a small extent, while the District imports rice for its own consumption, the quantity grown locally being insufficient for its needs. Grain goes principally from Gotegaon and Karelī stations in Narsinghpur tahsīl and from Gādarwāra in Gādarwāra tahsīl, and also to a small extent from Bohāni and Bābai. There is practically no export of grain from Narsinghpur station. Besides being sent to Bombay for the foreign trade, grain, and especially pulses, go to Berār and Hyderābād for local consumption. The exports of oilseeds were valued at Rs. 6 lakhs in 1903 and at Rs. 7 lakhs in 1902 when prices were higher. The largest bulk

recorded was 2 lakhs of maunds in 1900, which was a very good year for til. In this year owing to the high prices, the exports were valued at Rs. 11 lakhs. The bulk of oilseeds exported has largely increased since 1889-91 when it was only 80,000 maunds. In recent years til-seed has become a much more important staple than linseed. In 1903 the value of til exported was Rs. 4½ lakhs as against Rs. 1 lakh of linseed. In 1900 Rs. 10½ lakhs worth of til-seed were exported, and the large profits reaped by agriculturists from this source must have compensated them to a considerable extent for the general failure of the harvest. The year 1904 was a bad one for til and the exports fell to 36,000 maunds, value Rs. 1·23 lakhs. In former years the exports of linseed were larger than those of til. In 1889-91 the figures were equal at 40,000 maunds each. In recent years the exports of linseed have decreased to 25,000 maunds or less. Up till recently Narsinghpur tahsīl exported more linseed than til, while in Gādarwāra the exports of til-seed were the more important. Cotton-seed has begun to be exported in the last few years. It is not much used locally as a food for cattle. *Gullī* or mahuā-seed for oil is also exported in very small quantities.

Other articles.

114. The exports of *ghī* or clarified butter are very important and must yield considerable profits to agriculturists. The largest exports recorded were 27,000 maunds, valued at nearly Rs. 8 lakhs, in 1900. In 1903 they fell to 12,000 maunds, valued at Rs. 2·71 lakhs and rose again in 1904 to 20,000 maunds, valued at Rs. 5·24 lakhs. Narsinghpur however exports less than half as much *ghī* as Saugor, the area available for grazing being much more restricted. Gādarwāra is the principal station for the export of *ghī* and it is sent both to Calcutta and Bombay. The exports of raw cotton have been much larger during the last few years than at the beginning of the nineties. In 1889-91 they averaged only 12,000 maunds, whereas except in one year they have not fallen below 18,000 maunds since 1899. At the 30 years' settlement (1863-64) raw

cotton was considered the staple product of the District, and in that year 74,000 acres were devoted to it as against 31,000 in 1902-03. The recent increase in the European demand has not produced the expansion of cotton cultivation in Narsinghpur, which has been so marked in other Districts. In 1903 the exports were 41,000 maunds valued at Rs. 7 lakhs, this being the largest figure recorded. In 1904 they were 21,000 maunds valued at nearly Rs. 4½ lakhs. The cotton produced is of too coarse a quality even for the best Indian mills and it is sent principally to Jubbulpore. Quilts and carpets locally woven are sold to purchasers outside the District at Barmhān and Singhāji fairs and are sent to Bhopāl in small quantities. Hemp has become an important article of export in recent years, 57,000 maunds valued at Rs. 3·18 lakhs having been exported in 1903. In this figure are included gunny-bags to the value of Rs. 23,000, but these articles are much more largely imported than exported. Among other articles of export are myrabolans, of which 3000 maunds valued at Rs. 3800 were exported in 1903. The bulk of these probably come from the Chhindwāra forests. The exports of hides were valued at Rs. 33,000 in 1899 and Rs. 27,000 in 1900, but since then they have been much smaller. These are sent to Bombay as also the horns and bones of cattle slaughtered by the Muhammadan butchers. The exports of timber and firewood amounted to Rs. 42,000 in 1903 and Rs. 1,02,000 in 1904, the bulk of these probably also coming from Chhindwāra. They are exported principally from Narsinghpur and Bābai stations. Timber is sent to the Nimār District and also to Bombay. A little lac is exported to Northern India. Young male buffaloes are sent by road to Chhattisgarh in considerable numbers, and a good many cattle are also bought up by dealers from Jubbulpore for the Commissariat Department. The exports of coal from the Mohpāni mines are appparently not shown in the returns, as nearly the whole output of coal is sold to the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. Small quantities are sold to the factories in Nimār and Jubbulpore.

115. The bulk of imports has been smaller in recent years than in 1889-91. In that year the imports amounted to 337,000 maunds, while in 1904 they were 320,000 maunds and this was the highest figure during the preceding six years with the exception of 1900 when however the imports of 413,000 maunds included large quantities of grain for food. It is not likely that the bulk of imports has decreased in recent years and the more probable explanation is that in 1889-91 the trade of the Saugor District had not been so largely transferred from Narsinghpur as at present, the process of transfer of trade into a new route being always somewhat gradual. The value of imports in 1904 was Rs. 22·7 lakhs, this being the highest figure recorded in the last 6 years, except in 1900 when the figures as already explained were abnormal. Out of the imports in 1904 cotton manufactures accounted for Rs. 7 lakhs, metals for nearly 3 lakhs, salt for about 2½ lakhs, sugar Rs. 6 lakhs, hemp and jute manufactures for Rs. 1¼ lakhs, kerosine oil Rs. 87,000 and grain and pulse Rs. 74,000. Two-thirds of the twist and yarn of a total value of nearly Rs. 1·30 lakhs were from the Indian Mills, and a third from Europe. The bulk of the cloth woven locally is of coarse texture for which the finer counts of yarn spun in Europe are not required. European piece-goods were imported to the value of Rs. 3½ lakhs and Indian of Rs. 2 lakhs. Most of the European cloth for wearing comes through Bombay. Of metals the most important item manufactured is brass, consisting of eating and drinking vessels, the imports of which were nearly a lakh. Brass sheets to be made up locally were imported to the value of Rs. 64,000. Brass vessels are imported from Jubbulpore and Poona, and also from Northern India. Imports of unwrought copper are insignificant and this indicates that very little bell-metal is manufactured in the District. Copper vessels were imported to the value of Rs. 13,000, this figure being much higher than any other during the last six years. Articles manufactured of iron were imported to the value of Rs. 45,000

Imports.

and wrought-iron of Rs. 25,000. Iron implements are obtained from Panāgar in Jubbulpore, and boxes of sheet-iron and other articles from Burhānpur. Tyres for cart-wheels, bars, fencing-nails and other foreign articles are obtained from Bombay. Bohrās generally deal in imported hardware. Among the other metals imported are lead, zinc, and tin. A comparison of the imports of metals during the last six years is interesting. From 1899 to 1901 their total value was under a lakh of rupees. In 1902 it rose to Rs. 1·36 lakhs, in 1903 to Rs. 2·63 lakhs and in 1904 to Rs. 2·86 lakhs. These figures are a good and sure indication of the return of prosperity and recovery in the purchasing power of the people.

Imports—*continued.*

116. The imports of salt in 1904 were 77,000 maunds valued at Rs. 2·48 lakhs. The salt consumed locally is generally obtained from Khārāghoda on the Runn of Cutch and is imported by Agarwāl Baniās. The net imports of salt in 1903 were 66,000 maunds giving a consumption of 17 lbs. per head of population as against the Provincial average of 13 lbs. This high proportion shows probably that a larger quantity of salt is given to cattle in Narsinghpur than elsewhere. The imports increased from 51,000 maunds in 1899 to 77,000 in 1904 or by about 50 per cent. A portion of the salt imported may be sent to Bhopāl and Saugor by road. The net imports for 1904 amounted to 19½ lbs. per head and this increase also indicates the returning prosperity of the people. The imports of sugar were 83,000 maunds valued at Rs. 6·05 lakhs in 1904 having increased from 64,000 maunds in 1899. The figure for 1904 was higher by 9000 maunds than that of any of the preceding five years. Including the sugar produced locally the consumption per head of population in 1903 was 20 lbs. as against the Provincial figure of 13 lbs. In 1904 the consumption was 23½ lbs. As in the case of salt it is probable that some of the imports of sugar go outside the District, but the figure of consumption is nevertheless a very high one and shows a substantial capacity for the purchase of this luxury

among the people. The imports of refined sugar were valued at Rs. 2·24 lakhs as against Rs. 3·66 lakhs of *gur* or unrefined sugar. The Mauritius sugar is cheaper than Indian and is more extensively used. Indian sugar, which comes mainly from the United Provinces, is consumed by the more orthodox and scrupulous Hindus. It is sweeter than foreign sugar. Gur is imported to the extent of 50,000 to 60,000 maunds annually, the quantity produced locally being only some 12,000 maunds. The bulk of the imported *gur* comes from Cawnpore and other Districts in Northern India. The imports of hemp and jute amounting to Rs. 1¼ lakhs consist almost entirely of gunny-bags for the transport of grain. In 1903 they were larger and were valued at Rs. 1½ lakhs, the export trade in grain having been brisker in this year. 23,000 maunds of kerosine oil were imported and valued at Rs. 87,000, the quantity of this oil expended in the District being also steadily on the increase. Besides being used for lighting, for which it has almost entirely supplanted the vegetable oils as an agent, kerosine oil is rubbed on the body in cases of rheumatism. The old prejudice against it has entirely vanished and it is now used for lighting temples. The imports of grain and pulse valued at Rs. 74,000 consisted almost entirely of husked rice, of which the District does not produce a sufficient quantity for its needs. Among minor articles of import may be mentioned dyeing agents, alizarine and aniline dyes having completely supplanted the vegetable products previously used. Indigo continues to be imported and has not yet been supplanted by the German indigotin. Between one and two thousand maunds of turmeric are imported annually; it is used as a dye but more largely as a food. Imports of fresh fruits are continually increasing in bulk. They include guavas and cabbages from Jubbulpore and plums and oranges from Nāgpur. Cocoanuts are imported to the extent of about 13,000 maunds valued at Rs. 92,000 annually, and are used at all festivals and ceremonies. From one to two thousand maunds of dried fruits as dates, raisins, almonds and figs are also imported. Among spices arecanuts, chillies and ginger

are the most important articles. The imports of tobacco in 1904 were 2600 maunds, valued at Rs. 26,000. Tobacco is obtained from Northern India and Bengal and cheap foreign cigarettes are also sold at stations.

Excess value of exports.

117. The excess of exports over imports in 1903 was Rs. 22 lakhs, and in 1904 Rs. 11¼ lakhs. The total revenue raised from the District was Rs. 9·40 lakhs in 1902-03, and Rs. 8·48 lakhs in 1903-04. The excess of exports in 1903 was therefore not much less than three times the total revenue of the District, a very satisfactory state of affairs indeed. These favourable results have however only been achieved during the last two years in which the District has made a striking recovery from the effects of famine.

Classes engaged in trade.

118. Messrs. Ralli Brothers have agents at Karelī, Chhindwāra and Gādarwāra and conduct a considerable proportion of the trade in grain and oilseeds. Some Bhātias from Bombay are also engaged in the corn trade, and Mārwāri Baniās, the latter of whom make advances to the tenants before harvest and get grain at cheap rates. Some firms of Agarwāl Baniās from Cawnpore have shops in Narsinghpur and export *chironjī* and import *gur*, sugar, tobacco and salt. Hemp is grown by Mallāhs and Kewats and also by Gonds and Kaonrās, the ordinary Hindu castes objecting to grow it. Bohrās sell imported glass and hardware, and export timber from Bābai. The trade in jerked meat and hides and horns is in the hands of Muhammadan butchers. Grain for export is not now sold in the weekly markets, but is brought direct to the railway marts by tenants in their own carts. Imported goods are distributed in the interior by petty itinerant Baniās.

Railway stations.

119. Gādarwāra and Karelī are the most important exporting stations. In 1903 the exports from Gādarwāra were 538,000 maunds or 41 per cent. of the total,

those from Karelī being 433,000 or 33 per cent. In one year since 1899 the exports from Karelī exceeded those of Gādarwāra, but the above figures represent fairly accurately the relative importance of the two stations. The next station in importance is Gotegaon or Chhindwāra, the exports from which were 20 per cent. of the total in 1903. The exports from Narsinghpur are insignificant, amounting only to 3 or 4 per cent. of the total bulk, while from 1 to 2 per cent. go from Mohpāni. The only exports from this station other than coal, which is only partially shown in the returns, are myrabolans, timber and bamboos. Narsinghpur exports small quantities of grain and *ghī* and a considerable bulk of timber and bamboos. The main conclusion to be drawn from the returns is that the importance of Karelī as an exporting station has not declined to the extent that is commonly supposed. It still receives the trade of the southern part of Saugor and of the centre of Narsinghpur. In the matter of imports Gādarwāra is again the most important station, receiving on an average 37 per cent. of the total, while Karelī has 30 per cent., Narsinghpur 16 and Chhindwāra 15. Narsinghpur has thus as might be expected a considerably larger trade in imports in proportion to the other stations, but it does not approach Karelī, which is the most important centre for the distribution of goods in the centre and east of the District. The trade of the three small stations of Bohāni, Bābai and Karakbel is not shown in the railway returns, but the weekly returns of certain articles exported received from all stations in the Settlement Commissioner's office have been obtained for 1904; according to these the exports of wheat, rice, linseed and til from Bohāni and Karakbel amounted to 31,000 maunds, or 3 per cent. of the total exports from the District. No exports of these articles were shown from Bābai, but a considerable quantity of timber is believed to be sent from this station. No returns for it however are available. The bulk of this timber however probably comes from the Chhindwāra District.

120. The construction of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway through the District, which was completed in 1870, gave an enormous impetus to its trade, which has steadily increased ever since. Narsinghpur is 564 miles from Bombay, and the bulk of its external trade goes to that port. The railway line passes through the centre of the District from west to east, having a length of 78 miles, and the eight stations of Bābai, Gādarwāra, Bohāni, Karelī, Narsinghpur, Karakbel, Gotegaon or Chhindwāra and Bikrampur within its limits. Goods are booked at all these stations except Bikrampur. A short branch line has also been constructed to connect the Mohpāni coal mines with the main line at Gādarwāra station. This line was opened for coal traffic in 1872, and for public traffic in 1881. In 1896 a short extension of the branch line was carried for a distance of something over a mile to Gotītoria. The total length of the branch line is 13½ miles and the mileage of railway in the District 91½ miles. The southern and northern borders of the District are in no place more than 30 miles from the railway.

Railways.

121. Previous to the construction of the railway the principal trade route was the old road from Jubbulpore to Bombay running east and west in the same direction and parallel to the subsequent course of the line. The traffic in cotton on this road was formerly considerable. It was guarded by police at regular intervals and provided with rest-houses at every place of consequence. The importance of the road was entirely removed by the construction of the railway and it fell into complete disrepair. It was somewhat improved in the famine of 1896-97, and in 1900-01 the section of 8 miles from Karelī to Narsinghpur was metalled, and raised to the first class. The total length of the road in the District is 66 miles and the remaining 58 miles are maintained by the District Council. Next to the Jubbulpore-Bombay road, that leading from Narsinghpur to

Former trade routes. The old Bombay and Saugor-Karelī roads.

Saugor formerly ranked as the most important. The line it took was a somewhat difficult one, passing between Narsinghpur and the Nerbudda through a complicated network of ravines, caused by the confluence of the Sher and Umar rivers with the Nerbudda. After crossing the river at Kerpāni the road was taken through the Chānwarpātha tract and left the District by an opening in the hills at Bamhnī. When the railway was opened a new road was constructed from Bamhnī to Karelī station crossing the Nerbudda at Barmhān. It became the Saugor-Karelī road and was raised to the first class and metalled and bridged throughout except at Barmhān in 1877-78 at a cost of more than 3 lakhs. A temporary wooden bridge is constructed across the Nerbudda in the open season and tolls are levied for crossing the river, a ferry being worked during the rains. Up till 1888 when the Bīna-Saugor line was opened this road was of the first importance and was the mail and passenger route to Saugor besides being the outlet for nearly all the trade of that District. But since the construction of the railway, passenger traffic along it has almost entirely ceased, and the merchandise only comes to Karelī from Saugor and the north of Narsinghpur. The contract of the ferry which was formerly sold for Rs. 22,000, now only fetches Rs. 3000. The distance to Saugor from Narsinghpur by rail through Itārsi and Bīna is, however, much longer than by the direct route through Karelī, and during the open season the old fashioned camel cart, a lumbering two-storied vehicle drawn by two camels, carries passengers along the road, doing the 75 miles in 24 hours for a fare of Rs. 1-8, while the railway journey takes 19 hours and costs Rs. 3-14.

Roads north of the railway.

122. Another metalled road of importance is that from Barmhān to Tendūkhedā. This carries the trade of all the Chānwarpātha tract to Barmhān and then on to Karelī, the length of the Barmhān-Tendūkhedā road being 15 miles. The trade of the Narsinghpur tahsil north of the Nerbudda and west of the

Sher river also goes to Karelī. In the north-west of the District along the border from Saugor to Hoshangābād runs the old customs line, which was formerly a dense hedge made to prevent the admission of contraband salt into British territory. The hedge has now almost disappeared, but the land on which it stood has come to be used as a road. Further to the west and north of the railway line runs the Gādarwāra-Sainkhedā-Jhikolī road, maintained for 19 miles as a second-class road by the District Council. This is a somewhat important route, as produce is brought along it from Bhopāl and the Banwāri tract to Gādarwāra station. From Gādarwāra, village roads radiate to Sainkhedā, Palohā, Tendūkhedā and Barmhān. A second class road is also maintained by the District Council from Bohāni station to Khulrī. To the east and north-east of the railway the only roads fit for traffic are those from Narsinghpur to Sānkal and Narsinghpur to Kerpāni, the former being 15 and the latter 12 miles in length. Both are maintained as surface roads by the District Council. A village track also leads from Sānkal to Chhindwāra station, to which the produce of the tract north of the railway and east of the Sher river is taken, and also that of some villages belonging to the Jubbulpore District near Sānkal in which gram is largely grown. From the country further to the east than Sānkal, produce is taken to Shahpurā station in the Jubbulpore District.

Roads south of the railway.

123. To the south of the railway the short metalled road of 4 miles from Karelī to Amgaon is of consequence as it connects this large village with the railway. A cattle-market is held at Amgaoṅ and grain and forest produce from the Harrai tract of Chhindwāra come to the railway along this road. The Narsinghpur-Chhindwāra road runs for only 14 miles within the District of its total length of 80, and is metalled for the first five miles. It passes the important village of Singhpur, where a market is held three times a week, but much of the remainder of its course is through forest.

The Narsinghpur-Lakhnādon road runs for 26 miles in the District passing Dāngidhāna and Bachai. The first 15 miles of it are metalled. This road also runs mainly through forest country and there is little traffic on it. Its utility will be still further decreased by the opening of the Sātpurā railway. The Karakbel-Mekh-Mānegaon road is a small feeder leading from the station of Karakbel to the large village of Mekh. The trade of Karakbel station is however insignificant. Village tracks lead from Srīnagar south to Gorakhpur through Mungwāni, south-east to Umaria and north-east through Bagāspur to Chhindwāra. Another village road leads from Chhindwāra across the Dudhī river at Kāmti ghāt and passes by Deorī and Bārha to Bābai station. A considerable quantity of forest produce comes along this road from Chhindwāra. The trade from Shāhpur and the villages to the east of the Shakkar river goes to Karapgaon and Panāri on the old Bombay road and on to Bohāni or Gādarwāra station. A village track also leads from Chīchli to Gādarwāra and serves the villages lying between the Shakkar and Chītārewā rivers. The Gādarwāra tahsīl is not well provided with metalled roads, but the black soil is extremely hard when dry and does not crumble easily, and carts therefore travel readily on the village tracks during the open season, while in the rains all traffic is at a standstill.

Statistics.

124. The total length of roads maintained by the Public Works Department and District Council is 215 miles, of which 75 miles are metalled and 140 miles unmetalled. The cost of construction of the metalled roads was nearly Rs. 7 lakhs and their annual maintenance charges are Rs. 24,000. Similar figures for unmetalled roads are Rs. 87,000 and Rs. 7500 respectively. In addition to this, 133 miles of village roads are annually repaired by the District Council. Carriage in the open country is by carts which travel easily during the open season, but cannot pass on any except metalled roads during the rains. Among the hills buffaloes, bullocks and ponies are largely used for pack transport.

CHAPTER VI.

FORESTS AND MINERALS.

FORESTS.[1]

Description of forests.

125. The forests of the District were notified as Government reserves in 1879, but were not brought under departmental management until 1886, when they were placed under the jurisdiction of the Divisional Forest Officer of Hoshangābād. In 1889 they were separated from Hoshangābād and erected into a separate division, portions of the adjacent forest area of the Saugor and Damoh Districts being tacked on to it in order to constitute a sufficiently extensive charge. In 1902-03 the Tendūkhedā range, covering an area of 22 square miles, was transferred to Saugor District, and the other portions of the Saugor and Damoh forests already included in the Narsinghpur forest division to Narsinghpur District. The area of the Narsinghpur forest division was thus reduced from 271 to 249 square miles, and is now situated entirely within the District. The Government forests constitute 13 per cent. of the total District area. They are divided into 3 ranges, Rīchhai including the forests on the Vindhyan hills north of the Nerbudda, and Bachai and Khairī those on the Sātpurās to the south. More than half of the Rīchhai range lies on the summit of the Vindhyan plateau, and the rest on its southerly slopes and spurs which are here steep and sometimes precipitous. The forests of the Bachai range are situated on isolated spurs of the Sātpurā hills in the south-east and those of the Khairī range on the great block of high hills overlooking the Gādarwāra plain. They include an important strip of level land along the Dudhī river.

[1] The information on forests has been compiled from the Working-plan Reports and from notes furnished by Mr. A. L. Chatterjī, Divisional Forest Officer.

The soil at the foot of the hills is shallow and stony. The forest growth is everywhere irregular and of mixed composition. On the steeper slopes and less accessible areas it is more or less full, but elsewhere the density is extremely variable from close groups of limited extent to pure grass land, the result of long-continued destructive and uncontrolled exploitation in a not remote past. Five main types of forest may be distinguished, four having teak, *sāj* (*Terminalia tomentosa*), *khair* (*Acacia Catechu*) and bamboos respectively as the predominant trees, and the fifth consisting of miscellaneous mixed forest. Teak forest is found principally on hills sloping to the south and east, and on trap soils; it is entirely absent on sandy soils. When the forest has not been much interfered with, it is dense, especially on slopes and on undulating ground. Teak trees attain a height of about 50 feet, but are almost invariably crooked or otherwise defective. Reproduction except on the slopes of the hills and protected places is very backward. The other important trees found with teak are *sāj*, *dhaurā* (*Anogeissus latifolia*), *lendia* (*Lagerstroemia parviflora*) and scattered bamboos. *Sāj* forest is met with principally on level ground where the soil is clayey. It is inclined to be dense, but has usually been much thinned by patch cultivation in the past. The new growth promises well and is interspersed with old stunted and crooked trees. The average height of the trees is 60 feet. With *sāj* are associated mahuā (*Bassia latifolia*), *achār* (*Buchanania latifolia*), and the trees already mentioned. *Khair* forest is confined to poor and stony soils, and is represented on a large scale only in the Ramkhiria block. The trees are stunted and disposed to spread out near the ground, and in consequence rarely attain a height of more than 20 feet. With the *khair* are found *sāj*, *dhaurā*, *pāpra* (*Gardenia lucida*) and *bījā* (*Pterocarpus Marsupium*). Bamboo forest is generally met with on the steeper slopes. The culms are seldom more than 20 feet long and are usually quite thin. The only species found generally associated with bamboo is scattered *sāj*. Miscellaneous forest is the most common type and extends over every kind of ground

and soil. It seldom attains a height of more than 50 feet and represents every degree of density. *Dhaurā*, *lendia*, *ghiria* (*Chloroxylon Swietenia*) and *tinsā* (*Ougeinia dalbergioides*) are the commonest trees and are mixed with a host of inferior species and scattered teak and *sāj*.

Revenue and Management.

126. Taken generally the forests are not extensive and do not contain valuable timber. The revenue of the division in 1902-03 was the lowest in the Province. The revenue from sales of timber does not exceed Rs. 5000. That obtained from fuel is Rs. 1000 to 2000, from grazing Rs. 5000 to 6000, from bamboos Rs. 1500 to Rs. 3000 and from minor produce Rs. 2000 to Rs. 4000. The receipts from grazing were formerly much larger and amounted to Rs. 14,000 in 1891-92, but in that year practically the whole forest area was open to grazing for all animals. Subsequently the forests were closed to browsers, as camels, goats and sheep, and the number of animals grazing in the forests fell from 58,000 to 26,000. The minor produce includes receipts from mahuā, achār, catechu, myrabolans, honey, wax, hides and horns. The following statement shows the revenue, expenditure and surplus at the end of the last three decades and in 1902-03 and 1903-04 :—

	Revenue.	Expenditure.	Surplus.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1881-82	14,900	3,314	11,586
1891-92	29,473	13,968	15,505
1901-02	14,157	14,082	75
1902-03	15,817	13,839	1,978
1903-04	20,618	16,744	3,874

Up till 1889 the expenditure on establishment was nominal, while in 1891-92 the receipts from grazing were double the amount realised in the last two years. The establishment consists of a Divisional Officer, usually a member of the Provincial Service, a ranger, a deputy ranger, 2 foresters and 35 permanent and 3 temporary forest guards. All the forests in the division are A class reserves, and working-plans have been prepared for the whole area. The forests

are almost entirely closed to grazing by browsers. From 1899 to 1902 practically the whole area was protected from fire on the B class scale, the cost in 1902-03 being something under Rs. 3 per square mile. But in 1903-04 the protected area was reduced to 156 square miles.

Private forests.

127. Besides the Government forests the District contains 459 square miles of forest or grass land in the hands of village proprietors. Of this 206 square miles consist of tree forest and 253 square miles of scrub jungle and grass. The combined area of Government and private forests is thus 708 square miles or over 36 per cent. of that of the District. The principal species found in them are teak, *sāj*, mahuā, *achār*, *dhaurā* (*Anogeissus latifolia*), *tinsā* (*Ougeinia dalbergioides*), *sāleh* (*Boswellia serrata*) and *palās* (*Butea frondosa*). At the time of the 30 years' settlement the private forests contained more valuable timber than the Government reserves; and as they are nearer to the market and have been cut without much regard to conservation, they have largely removed the demand for produce from the latter. Very little valuable timber now remains in these forests, with the exception of a few estates, such as Pitehrā, Chīchli, Gangai and Madanpur, where some consideration has been paid to them, generally on account of the estate being under the management of the Court of Wards.

Arboriculture.

128. The length of roads in charge of the Public Works Department is 82 square miles, of which 59 square miles are provided with avenues and the rest stand in need of them. Avenues exist on the Saugor-Karelī and the short length of the Karelī-Amgaon road; and on parts of the Narsinghpur-Lakhnādon, Barmhān-Tendūkhedā and Narsinghpur-Chhindwāra roads. In 1903-04 the Public Works Department was occupied in filling up gaps in the existing avenues on the Karelī and Lakhnādon roads and in continuing the avenue on the Tendūkhedā road. They maintained three nurseries, two on the Karelī and Ten-

dūkhedā roads and the third in Narsinghpur. The average cost of maintaining each nursery was Rs. 65 annually. Saplings are transplanted between November and January in pits 2½ to 3 feet in diameter, filled with fertilising material and earth. A fence is constructed round them and an earthen pot is sunk in the ground near the roots to be kept filled with water. The young trees require tending for two or three years after plantation. *Nīm* (*Melia indica*), *babūl* (*Acacia arabica*), *pipal* (*Ficus religiosa*), and mango are the trees most commonly planted. Of the roads in charge of the District Council, the old Bombay road has an avenue for the whole 52 miles of its length in the District, and the Gādarwāra-Sainkhedā and Narsinghpur-Kerpāni roads have avenues for short lengths. Little has hitherto been done in the direction of arboriculture by the District Council, such small funds as they could allot to this object having been placed at the disposal of the Public Works Department. In 1903 however an allotment was made for opening a nursery of mahuā saplings at Narsinghpur and for the commencement of avenues on the Narsinghpur-Sānkal and Narsinghpur-Kerpāni roads. The Council realises from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000 a year by the sale of the mango crop and of deadwood from the existing avenues.

MINERALS.

129. Coal. Coal measures occur in the Barakar group of the Damudā series of Gondwāna rocks, and there is an outcrop of them along the northern edge of the Sātpurā basin at Mohpāni. Explorations carried out previous to 1860 had disclosed four seams, aggregating 50 feet thick at the bottom of a gorge cut out by the Chitārewā river. The Nerbudda Coal and Iron Company was formed in 1860 with a capital of £250,000 for the purpose of working the mines, and also the iron-ore deposits of Tendūkhedā, but the latter have never been taken up by the Company. The history of the Company has been unfortunate. At the time they started their operations, it was believed that the railway line

from Bhusāwal to Jubbulpore would be opened almost as soon as the mines began working, and that means of transit to a market would become immediately available. Work was therefore begun at once, but the railway was not opened until 1870 and the branch line to Mohpāni was not constructed until 1872. During the first twelve years of its existence therefore the Company expended its efforts in turning out very small quantities of coal at a dead loss, the coal being sent in carts to meet the advancing line of railway. About £80,000 of capital were expended in this manner without return. As soon as the branch line to the colliery was opened and work began to be undertaken on a larger scale, it was discovered that the coal to the north of the river was cut off by faults, and the measures did not extend to the south as had been anticipated. Shafts were sunk to the south-east following the seam of coal as it dipped beneath the river, but met with quicksands and had to be given up. Further attempts resulted in the sinking of one or two shafts from which coal could be worked. In the meantime the original areas worked were nearly exhausted. The Company paid no dividends until 1874 when small dividends were earned for a short period. 27,000 tons of coal were mined in 1884, this being the largest quantity obtained up to that year. The Company had in the meantime relinquished their right to lease the iron-ore deposits north of the railway. During the ensuing years the Company stopped the attempts to sink shafts on to the seams exposed in the river and originally worked, and prospected over a new area to the west of the original mines. Here they succeeded in proving several seams of coal, and sank fresh shafts, the new mine being about two miles to the west of the old one. The new seams were discovered by the Manager, Mr. Simpson, whose energy and courage under very adverse fortune are reflected in the reports submitted to Government. Other difficulties beset the Company owing to the competition of new collieries, from which the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, practically the only customer of the Company, could obtain its supplies. Their prices were

in consequence forced down, and the small profits they were able to make vanished. During the last few years the output of the colliery has substantially increased. Finally in 1904 the Company disposed of its property to the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, who took over the working of the mines. The purchase price paid was about £40,000, and with the advantage of the stronger financial position of the Railway Company, a considerable development is anticipated in the working of the colliery. The Mohpāni coal is of mediocre quality, 1½ tons of it being equivalent in efficiency of working to one ton of best Bengal steam coal or four-fifths of a ton of Welsh coal. The similar figure for Warorā is 1·80 tons, this being the only well-known colliery whose coal is of an inferior quality to that of Mohpāni. The quantity of coal extracted and the amount realised from sales at different periods are shown below :—

	Tons.	Value. Rs.
1881	10,454	94,147
1891	18,067	1,47,837
1901	43,046	1,74,690
1903	31,443	1,62,504

At the date of the transfer the coal was sold to the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company at Rs. 6 per ton, the price having been forced down by Rs. 2-10 per ton since 1890, in consequence of the competition of other collieries. The cost of raising the coal was Rs. 4-10 per ton during the last period of working. The number of operatives employed has been from 800 to 1,000. The miners are principally Gonds, whose insensibility to fear qualifies them well for underground work. But difficulties are experienced in obtaining a sufficient supply of labour, as the Gonds are of an indolent disposition, and can obtain enough money to satisfy their simple wants by working only for a few days in a week. The daily wages of coal-cutters are from 6 to 10 annas, and those of ordinary coolies 3 annas. During the famines the Company gave assistance to the people as far as possible by employing labourers on alternate days and in

other ways. Coal-measures are also exposed in the rivers Sher and Shakkar, but they are not extensive.

Iron.

130. Deposits of iron-ore exist in the north-west of the District at Tendūkhedā, about two miles south of the Vindhyan escarpment. The mines are in the open plain and occupy an area of about 12 acres. They have been worked for several generations, and remains of old diggings are numerous. Prospecting operations have not hitherto been undertaken outside the area occupied by the mines, but the fact that the veins do not appear in wells which have been dug to an equivalent depth in neighbouring villages, appears to indicate that they do not extend far. The formation is limestone, impure deposits of which are found in masses here and there. These sometimes crop up on the surface and are sometimes found imbedded under from 20 to 50 feet of alluvial stratified deposits. The iron-ore is found at a depth of 30 to 50 feet in veins of a few inches to 3 feet at the most in thickness. The ore is red and brown hæmatite. It occurs both in crystalline and non-crystalline forms, the latter being much mixed with clayey impurities. The former kind of ore is called *pakkā*, as it contains a large proportion of metallic iron ; the latter or *katchā* ore does not show any metallic lustre on its fractured surface and is of less weight. For smelting purposes both kinds of ore are mixed. The pits are situated on *nazūl* or Government land and no royalty is charged. The mining is carried on by local Lohārs, and the ore is dug out in pits about 12 feet square and 30 to 50 feet deep. Each pit is maintained only for two or three years, the fallen debris being cleared out after the rainy season each year. The iron produced is of excellent quality. About 14 persons are engaged on the working and supply of each furnace. Both pig iron and *kherī* or steel are produced. The ore is smelted in a primitive open furnace mixed with an equal quantity of charcoal. The furnace consists of a hollow shaft constructed of masonry in an open pit to hold about 19 maunds of ore and charcoal. On

one side of the shaft is a hole for the bellows and on the other a hole for the slag to trickle through into a slag pit. The proportion of iron to smelted ore is 25 per cent. In 1864 the number of furnaces working was 84, and the outturn was about 800 maunds annually; it was then considered that the output had fallen off owing to the partial exhaustion of the mines and the increasing price of charcoal. But at last settlement (1891-93) there were 220 furnaces. In 1900 the industry was almost extinct, but subsequently revived slightly, and in 1903 there were 10 furnaces. The following statement shows the amount of iron-ore smelted and iron produced in recent years :—

	Iron-ore used, maunds.	Quantity of iron smelted, maunds (of 80 lbs.)	Value at 20 seers per rupee.
1895 ...	15,680	3,920	7,840
1898 ...	7,377	1,851	3,702
1900 ...	1,307	327	654
1901 ...	2,178	544	1,088
1903 ...	1,878	469	938

There does not seem to be any good ground for holding that the deposits of ore are exhausted, though this may be the case. But the decay in the industry may perhaps be attributed to the competition of imported iron, and it is said also that the supply of charcoal is insufficient. The iron is sold in lumps in the weekly bazars and the villagers buy it and have it made into agricultural implements by the local Lohār or blacksmith. The selling-price is 20 seers per rupee for iron and 10 seers per rupee for steel. The only article manufactured locally is the *pāns* or share for the *bakhar* (surface plough).

Other minerals

131. Copper ores occur at Barmhān disseminated through an argillaceous schist in the Transition rocks. The band of rock in which the ores occurred was found to be 6 feet thick. The ores consisted of blue and green carbonates and grey and red oxides. The average yield of copper from the carbonates was 28 per cent. The ores were worked by the Nerbudda Coal & Iron Company from about 1880 to

1890, but the business was unprofitable and was abandoned. A quarry of marble stone exists near Bagāspur and some samples submitted to the Director of the Geological Survey in 1904 were reported on in somewhat favourable terms. A mining lease has been applied for by a native prospector. The marble is mottled and slabs of a uniform colour are not generally obtainable. Nor does there appear to be any good white stone. The quarry has been known for years past to yield rubble-stone for building and road-metal.

CHAPTER VII.

FAMINE.

Early Famines.

132. No records of any sort bearing on famines previous to the last decade (1891—1900) have been obtainable for Narsinghpur, and the following notice, extracted from the retrospect contained in the Provincial Famine Report of 1896-97, is all that can be given. The earliest scarcities of which accounts are available resulted more from political disturbances than climatic causes. War and its effects created the distress which prevailed in the upper Nerbudda valley during the years 1771, 1783 and 1809. It is recorded that in 1771 wheat sold in Narsinghpur at 5 seers or 10 lbs. to the rupee. Since the District came under British Administration in 1818, the general opinion is that severe famine was not experienced until 1896-97. In 1832-33 there was considerable distress, the harvest being spoilt by excessive followed by deficient rain. In 1854-55 the spring crops were damaged by excessive rain. In 1864-65 heavy rain in February and March caused rust in the wheat, while gram was attacked by caterpillars. Prices rose and some distress ensued. In 1868, the year of the Bundelkhand famine, the first sowings were rendered useless by a drought in July, and the crops re-sown in July again suffered from want of rain in August, but a heavy fall in the middle of September saved them and also gave a fair spring harvest. From 1885 to 1888 the autumn crops were poor and this was followed by a partial failure of both harvests in 1888-89, when there was apparently distress among the poorer classes especially in the hill tracts.

133. The recent cycle of bad years began from 1893-94.

The bad years from 1893-94.

In 1893 the ordinary monsoon was heavy while 7 inches of rain fell in September and the succeeding months from October to March were damp and cloudy. The rice, kodon and wheat crops were poor. The poor harvest resulted in considerable hardship to the labouring classes during the next hot weather and rains, and the death-rate rose from 33 per mille in 1893 to 43 in 1894. It was found also that the stocks of grain were low and many cultivators experienced difficulty in obtaining seed-grain in 1894. In 1894 the rains of September and October were heavy and continuous, over 16 inches being received in these two months, while two inches fell in November and nearly an inch in both February and March. The October rain rotted the seed sown at first and made re-sowing necessary. Spells of cloudy weather with an unnaturally warm and moist atmosphere followed and induced rust first in linseed and then in wheat. Gram and masūr (lentil) were attacked by caterpillars. The wheat crop was only 53 per cent. of normal while linseed failed entirely and gram and masūr gave a third of an average crop. Severe scarcity ensued. The collection of *kankar* or limestone nodules was started at five places and Rs. 33,000 were expended. The forests were thrown open, and Rs. 32,000 were advanced in agricultural loans. The Agent of the Mohpāni mines gave as much labour as he could and employed men in alternate daily shifts to increase the amount of employment available. All circumstances pointing to distress were present. There was an outbreak of petty crime and prisoners admitted into the jail were markedly debilitated. Numbers of beggars assembled in the towns. The death-rate for 1895 was nearly 54·5 per mille, an increase of 11 on 1894 and of 21 on 1893. The birth-rate fell to 29 from 38 in the previous year. The monsoon of 1895 was good up till September when it abruptly terminated, only 3 inches of rain being received in that month and practically no more till the end of March. The crops were, however, distinctly better than in the pre-

vious year, wheat giving 68 per cent. of a normal harvest, gram 83 per cent. and all the other crops fair outturns. The cropped area, however, showed a decline of 39,000 acres on the previous year. The harvests as a whole were not good enough to reimburse the agricultural classes for the losses they had previously suffered and distress continued among the poor. Poorhouses were established at Narsinghpur and Gādarwāra by private charity and the Government forests were thrown open. The death-rate for 1896 was 58 per mille, an increase of 4 on the previous year, and the birth-rate declined from nearly 29 to just over 27.

The famine of 1897.

134. The rains of 1896 were heavy up to the end of August when they stopped as in the previous year after the first week of September. Narsinghpur had a fall of over an inch in the latter part of September and Gādarwāra none. The autumn crops were very poor and much of the land became too dry to be sown with spring crops, a most unfortunate result, as good showers fell in the cold weather and those fields which had retained sufficient dampness in the soil to allow the seed to germinate gave a very good outturn. The harvest taken as a whole was however only 40 per cent. of normal. The wheat area had been regularly declining from 246,000 acres in 1893-94 to 159,000 in 1894-95, 132,000 in 1895-96 and 92,000 in 1896-97. Test-works were started by the District Council in October 1896 and converted to relief-works in December. The roads on which work was undertaken were those from Narsinghpur to Sānkal, Gādarwāra to Sainkhedā, Narsinghpur to Lakhnādon, Barmhān to Tendūkhedā and Karelī to Saugor. The numbers on works rose to 18,000 at the end of January, fell temporarily in February and rose again to 36,000 at the end of March. In April cholera broke out on some of the works and reduced the numbers, and the collection of the mahuā crop, which was a good one, also afforded employment in April and the first part of May. People then returned to the works and the numbers reached a maximum of 48,000 in June. Poorhouses were opened in Narsinghpur, Gādarwāra and

Chhindwāra and contained some 2,500 inmates in July 1897. Kitchens were started under the District Superintendent of Police, 44 being established in all and village relief was first distributed in January and extended during the rains, when 14,000 persons were on the relief lists. Relief measures of different kinds lasted from December 1896 to the end of December 1897. The highest number of persons in receipt of assistance was 59,000 or 16 per cent. of the population in June, and the total number of day-units relieved nearly 11½ million, the incidence per day-unit being Re. 0-1-5. The expenditure on famine-relief was Rs. 10 lakhs. Rs. 2 lakhs were distributed from the Charitable Relief Fund mainly in grants for seed and cattle, and Rs. 55,000 were given out under the Agriculturists' Loans Act. Famine loans to the extent of Rs. 25,000 were advanced to proprietors and cultivators. The second instalment of the land revenue amounting to two-thirds of the whole was suspended. The mortality of the year was 88 per mille on the deduced population and indicated the severity of the famine. The high death-rate was, however, no doubt partly due to the enfeebled physical condition of the lower classes who had already sustained two years of bad harvests and insufficient food. The highest monthly rates were 8 per mille in April and 10 per mille in October. The birth-rate for the year was only 22 per mille. Prices were at famine rates, that of wheat varying from 15 to 18 lbs. per rupee, of juār from 17½ to 24 and of rice from 13 to 16½. The price of wheat was about double the rate of the preceding five years.

The years 1898 and 1899.

135. The liberal advances and gifts from the charitable fund for seed-grain caused the area sown with autumn crops in 1897 to be larger than ever before, and the autumn harvest was excellent. The total cropped area however was only 85 per cent. of normal and the combined outturn in 1897-98 was 102 per cent. of an average harvest. In 1898-99 the monsoon stopped prematurely and there was no rain from October to January; the spring crops were greatly injured and the combined outturn

was less than two-thirds of normal. Remissions of land-revenue were made to the extent of Rs. 98,000 in the tracts which had undergone most deterioration.

The famine of 1900.

136. In 1899-1900 with an interval of only two years after 1897 the rains again failed entirely. The rainfall from June to November was only 23 inches or less than half the normal. The autumn harvest failed almost completely with the exception of cotton and til. Two inches of rain fell in January and greatly benefited the spring crops, wheat giving 60 per cent., gram 45 and masūr (lentil) 30 per cent. of a normal crop. The combined harvest was however only 52 per cent. of normal. The District was not seriously affected in this year and such distress as existed was due rather to high prices and the absence of demand for labour. Although the actual harvests of 1899-1900 were even worse than those of 1896-97, the failure followed on two years of good and fair crops, instead of as in 1896-97 on three bad years, during a great part of which distress had already been prevalent. The numbers on relief never amounted to 3 per cent. of the population, and until the rains of 1900 the mortality was normal. Relief-measures began in October 1899, village relief being distributed to the infirm and incapable in the forest tracts of the south and in villages along the Nerbudda. Village works were opened in several villages towards the close of the year, the eradication of *kāns* grass being taken in hand in different localities; the cutting of fire-lines in forest areas was also adopted as a means of providing labour. Difficulties arose however in connection with this form of work, owing to the fact that the majority of applicants for employment were women, for whom the labour was not suitable; they were set to cut grass where it was growing on the line, and employed in the repair of boundary pillars and the stacking of timber. Tanks were constructed or repaired at Karelī, Bagāspur and Khamaria. Grass-cutting was also undertaken and grass to the value of Rs. 1,500 was cut, but only Rs. 300

could be realised from its sale; none of the grass stacked at Gorakhpur or Rīchhai could be sold. Two works were opened by the Public Works Department consisting of metal-breaking on the Lakhnādon road, and of the embankment of fields at Bābai near Gādarwāra, but the numbers employed never reached 3000 and the workers were principally refugees from Bhopāl or the residents of adjoining villages. Kitchens for the provision of cooked food were opened in November 1899 and not finally closed till October 1900. Between 30 and 40 were in existence during the cold and hot weather months, while in the rains, owing to the difficulties of communication, the number was raised to 68. The attendance was largest in the beginning of July. Of the kitchens 22 were managed by the police and 46 by *mukaddams* or headmen of villages, who were generally assisted in the clerical work by schoolmasters or patwāris. The highest number of persons on all forms of relief was 8,000 or 2·3 per cent. of the population on the 26th July; the total expenditure was Rs. 1·52 lakhs and the total number of day-units relieved over 1½ million, the incidence per day-unit being Re. 0-1-6. Rs. 46,000 were received from the Indian Charitable Relief Fund and distributed in grants for seed-grain, and clothes and blankets to the poor. Rs. 50,000 were also allotted for distribution under the Agriculturists' Loans Act. The Mohpāni Coal Company raised their wages and gave employment to needy persons in the south of the Gādarwāra tahsīl. The Administration approved of the suspension of about half the land-revenue demand, but it was found that so many tenants had paid their rents as to render such a large measure unnecessary, and finally Rs. 1·21 lakhs only were suspended. Arrears of land-revenue amounting to Rs. 1·70 lakhs were remitted. The highest price of wheat was 16 lbs. in July 1900, and the average for 1900 18½ lbs. The price of juār for 1900 was 24 lbs. but for several months it was not available. The mortality for 1899 was 28 per mille, and for 1900, 34·6 per mille. The highest monthly mortality was 5·6 per mille in September 1900. There was thus no direct famine mortality, but as in

other Districts the lower classes became to a certain extent enfeebled by an insufficiency of proper food and the consumption of mahuā and wild fruits in place of grain, and tended to succumb more readily to the malarial fever which is always prevalent in the latter part of the rainy season. Famine administration presents no special difficulties in Narsinghpur, but an influx of wanderers may be expected from the adjoining territory of Bhopāl.

CHAPTER VIII.

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

Revenue System of the Marāthās.

137. Under the revenue system of the Marāthās in the Northern Districts, villages were farmed out to the highest bidder, and whatever rights or consideration the village headmen may have enjoyed in the past were almost entirely effaced. Their method was to keep as many villages as possible under direct management, collecting the rents from the cultivators. Leases were however frequently given for short terms of from one to three years, the margin of profit left to the lessees being seldom more than a tenth of the rental assets. The settlements were made annually and the Amil or Pargana Officer seems to have had full power to rate each village as he chose and to oust the headmen if they did not accept the revenue demanded. The patel having received the announcement of his revenue, could apportion it among the cultivators as he pleased and if the cultivator did not accept the rent demanded on his holding, he must make way for someone who would. As however the patel received only a percentage on the collections of rental, it was his object to apportion this as justly as possible according to the capacities of the fields. When indiscriminate extortion was practised on him, he had no option but to rack-rent the tenants, but the system itself was not ill-calculated to get the maximum revenue from the country, and it was also flexible, and except so far as this course was prevented by the necessities of the central government, the demand was in theory held to vary with the character of the seasons. During the greater part of the Marāthā administration also, the District had an internal market for produce in the large garrisons maintained at Srīnagar and Chaurāgarh.

Grant says[1]:—'The value of this counterbalance may most 'properly be considered in estimating the causes which so 'misled us in our first assessments, but it is obvious that in 'particular instances no advantages of assessment or improve-'ments of administration could have compensated even 'pecuniarily for the suppression of a petty court or the 'removal of a standing camp. The old town of Srīnagar, in 'Marāthā days a provincial capital, has now sunk to the level 'of a mere agricultural village, while its garrison of a thou-'sand matchlockmen are represented by a head constable 'and four constables. The noble fortress of Chaurāgarh 'has long been a mere lair for tigers, and there is now not a 'soldier in the District which formerly supported an army of 'thousands.' Thus the average realisations of revenue during the period, 1806—1816, were Rs. 5·73 lakhs annually, but the annual expenditure on salaries and the pay of troops during the same period was Rs. 8·57 lakhs. The highest revenue realised by the Marāthās was Rs. 6·83 lakhs in 1807. In 1823-24, under British administration, the revenue realised was Rs. 6·08 lakhs and the amount expended in the District was Rs. 1,93,000.[2]

Mistakes of early British administration.

138. It may easily be imagined how, in the absence of easy means of transport for the surplus produce, the burden of the revenue was enormously increased by the removal of the garrison and of the market thus afforded to the cultivators at their own doors. This factor was not however recognised in the early days of our administration, the history of which constitutes in Narsinghpur as elsewhere a disastrous attempt to work up to the assessment of the Marāthās when the altered circumstances rendered the people incapable of paying it, the assessment being regarded moreover not as a fluctuating but as a fixed demand to be realised irrespectively of the character of the seasons. The greater part of the District,

[1] Settlement Report, para. 48.

[2] The foregoing figures are in Nāgpur rupees, one of which is equivalent to about 13⅓ annas or five-sixths of a Government rupee.

that is the area south of the Nerbudda, was ceded by Appa Sāhib Bhonsla in 1817, while the tract north of the Nerbudda was made over to us for management by Sindhia in 1826, full sovereignty being acquired in 1860. The first regular settlement was made in 1820 for a period of 5 years, the demand being fixed on a rising scale commencing at Nāgpur Rs. 6·68 lakhs or Rs. 5·56 lakhs of Government money, a sum actually in excess of the last Marāthā assessments. But the inflexibility of our revenue system increased the pressure in a ratio far exceeding the mere numerical augmentation of the revenue. A general reduction of 10 per cent. had to be given in 1822, and further reductions were recommended. It was followed by a second quinquennial settlement for Rs. 4·39 lakhs of Government money, the results of which were also disastrous, and by two triennial settlements in which the revenue was gradually reduced to Rs. 4 lakhs. Grant writes of this period [1]:—'In fact it is no exaggeration 'to say that the first fifteen years of our administration were 'engrossed in one continued struggle to keep together and 'support the agricultural community under an almost 'unbearable pressure of land revenue demand. The first 'settlements were founded on the later Marāthā assess-'ments, which, as has already been stated, had been most 'unduly strained to meet an extraordinary crisis. But in 'Marāthā times the people had at least in their favour the 'certainty of a good market among the troops and the hope 'of evasion of payment. As in all trade transactions 'between orientals, the rent-roll showed rather the proposed 'demand than the anticipated receipts. When our officers 'attempted to impose a rigid system of collection on so 'unsound a basis and the temporary prop afforded by the 'consumption of the Nerbudda Field Force was withdrawn, 'the whole unsubstantial fabric broke down, and the 'impolicy of the assessments was shown by the entire 'desertion of numerous villages. It is obvious that under 'such circumstances general administration must have been 'almost a blank. In fact two-thirds of the English corre-

[1] Settlement Report, pages 38—40.

'spondence of those times refer solely to revenue reductions, 'and Captain Sleeman goes so far as to say that the two 'years he had spent in Narsinghpur, by far the most 'laborious of his life, were exclusively devoted to keeping 'his District from running to waste. Bad as was the state 'of things under our rule south of the Nerbudda, it was far 'surpassed by the distress north of the river in Deorī under 'Sindhia's government. The oppressed farmers of that 'District, rack-rented beyond endurance, came over and 'sought Captain Sleeman's assistance in a body. The 'details of general administration were left very much to 'individual judgment, and not only did the immediate 'importance of revenue management lead to a subordination 'to it of all other interests, but the habit of propping up, 'necessary to support an unsound revenue system, gave rise 'to a general interference in details, which must have been 'as prejudicial to the character of the people as it was 'injurious to their true interests. Thus farmers were not 'allowed to sublet or transfer their farms, and no farmer 'was allowed to engage without security, nor were heads of 'villages consulted in the appointment or dismissal of their 'village accountants or watchmen, though they had enjoyed 'these privileges under the most despotic native govern-'ments. Indeed so far was this carried that I have met 'with an instance in which, on the death of a mālguzār, the 'succession of his heir was made dependent on the good 'opinion of the patwāri and the kotwār. The great chiefs 'were entirely deprived of the management of their estates, 'and regular settlements were made on their behalf with 'their tenants by the District Officers, who also under-'took to make arrangements for the payment of their 'debts and for the management of their incomes, as if 'they were minors in the Court of Wards. Indeed so 'far were the patriarchal functions of the District Officer 'carried, that he took it upon himself to fix the prices 'at which grain and other staples should be sold in open 'market. The constitution of the Province seems about this 'time to have attracted special notice in high quarters, for

'Mr. Martin Bird, Senior Member of the Board of Revenue of 'Bengal, was deputed to visit it and to review its administra-'tion. The defects which especially struck him were those 'which have been noticed in the above brief historical resumé. 'He proposed, as ameliorative measures, a long-term settle-'ment, a moderate demand and a withdrawal of all unneces-'sary interference, especially in the matter of rents. These 'recommendations were carried out, but the result of the 'third was that the prohibition against raising the rents 'was held to extend to the landlord, and in consequence the 'belief grew up that the rents of tenants could not be inter-'fered with except at revision of settlement, a rule which 'was certainly not intended by Mr. Bird.' In 1836 a 20 years' settlement was made by Captain Ouseley in which the revenue was reduced from Rs. 4 to Rs. 3·47 lakhs, from 60 to 70 per cent. of the recorded village rental being taken as the Government demand. As regards the valuation of land Grant wrote[1]: 'The Settlement Officer had a more trust-'worthy guide in the system of appraisement, on which the 'assessments of our native predecessors were founded. 'The essence of these seems to have lain in the rating of the 'land by the quantity of seed which it could take up; but it 'would appear that the estimates once obtained in this 'manner for some valuable product such as wheat, formed a 'unit constant in value for all descriptions of produce, and 'therefore necessarily variable in size. For instance a *māni* '(4 maunds or $5\frac{1}{3}$ bushels) of wheat would occupy about $2\frac{1}{2}$ 'acres of land, and under these circumstances, the *māni* or 'unit of land would have been fixed at a certain value—say 'Rs. 10. Then if $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of wheat were worth Rs. 10 it 'would probably take from 5 to 6 acres of gram to make up 'the sign or unit, and even more of the poorer staples, such 'as kodon or kutkī. In addition to the natural varieties of 'the soil, other elements would be introduced by its situa-'tion, its degree of exhaustion, and by the means and 'character of the cultivator. All these points were discuss-'ed at the annual meeting held by the patel and his cultivators

[1] Settlement Report, para. 126.

'for the allotment of the village lands; and the strain im-'posed on their whole faculties by the necessity of meeting 'very heavy assessments seems to have intensified their 'powers of discrimination to an extent now unknown. 'Every tolerable cultivator, said Captain Sleeman, knows ex-'tremely well the peculiar qualities of every kind of soil, 'and estimates the degree of exhaustion in those that he 'takes.'

Results of the 20 years' settlement.

139. Of the results of the settlement, Grant said: 'Captain Ouseley has been accused 'of having neglected the interests of 'the State in the assessments both of 'this and the neighbouring District of 'Hoshangābād. But whatever his motives may have been, 'the result of his acts speaks for him more eloquently than 'the most elaborate arguments. It has been seen that up 'to 1835 Narsinghpur appeared to lie under a kind of ban, 'fatal to all its attempts to attain prosperity. There is now 'not a District in the Central Provinces which is so univer-'sally prosperous. The ease with which the revenue is 'collected and the peaceable character of the people are 'notorious. The most embarrassed landholding families 'have by degrees paid off their debts, and during the pro-'ceedings for award of proprietary right, this has been 'a common ground of application for admission to a share 'from younger branches, who have waived their rights 'pending the recovery of the family fortunes. Riches have 'been amassed in mere agriculture, which in some instances 'are said to amount to lakhs of rupees, and evidences of 'plenty and comfort are universal in the large substantial 'houses and well-stocked farm-yards of the patels. Proofs 'of prosperity even more tangible than these may be drawn 'from statistics. During the 20 years of the settlement the 'number of wells increased from 1,200 to 2,300, the number 'of ploughs from 19,000 to 35,000, and the gross rental from 'Rs. 6,70,000 to Rs. 8,27,000. When it is remembered that 'the people of this Province are apathetic even among Indians '—that, till of late years, the valley has been land-locked as

'regards trade or even intercourse with the exterior—and that 'the revenue rules have prevented anything like real free trade 'in land, this marked and rapid progress cannot fail to show 'the true value of Captain Ouseley's assessment.'

The 30 years' settlement.

140. The 20 years' settlement expired in 1856, but the disturbances consequent on the Mutiny postponed for some years the preparations for resettlement and it was not taken in hand until 1862. The settlement was effected by Mr., afterwards Sir, Charles Grant, whose Report is a most able and interesting one and has been frequently quoted in these pages. The settlement was preceded by a cadastral survey. The revenue payable at the time of resettlement was Rs. 3·31 lakhs. It must be remembered that this figure, the demand of the 20 years' settlement, which had been in force for 27 years, was not more than two-thirds of that which the District had been paying during the period of Marāthā administration. It was calculated that at the former assessment the price of wheat had been taken as Rs. 4 per *māni* (of 4 maunds[1]), whereas at the time of resettlement it was Rs. 8 per māni. As the railway was not open however, and prices had been temporarily inflated by one or two bad seasons, it was considered unsafe to assume a higher rate than Rs. 6 per māni, which would give about Rs. 5[2] as the harvest price obtainable by the farmers and cultivators themselves. This conclusion permitted of an enhancement of 25 per cent. in the revenue. On this basis it was assumed that the rental value of land should be estimated for the purposes of assessment at an increased rate of 12½ per cent. which would give the increase of 25 per cent. in revenue, the whole increase being added to the existing revenue of the village.

Valuation of soils.

141. The rental value of the village as thus deduced was checked by two estimates, one founded on the classification of soils and the other on the estimated value

[1] Equivalent to 40 seers per rupee.

[2] Or 32 seers per rupee.

of the recorded produce. For the first or soil rate, the District was divided into three circles, the black-soil circle embracing all the level land of the valley; the river-bank circle consisting of the undulating tracts bordering on the rivers; and the hill-circle containing the hill and submontane tracts. In the Gādarwāra pargana a special first circle was created, including some 40 villages of a similar character, in which, owing to the high level of the sub-surface water, irrigation was easily available and sugarcane largely produced. Four soils were distinguished, *kābar* or the black soil, *mund* or black soil with an admixture of sand, *patarua* or sandy and *ritua* or stony soil. Each soil was given a rental value per acre which varied for each of the circles mentioned above, the value being reduced for the river-bank, and more largely for the hill-circle. Thus in Narsinghpur the value of *kābar* was Rs. 2 per acre in the plains, Rs. 1-14 near the rivers and Rs. 1-12 in the hills. In the special sugarcane growing circle of Gādarwāra, *kābar* was valued at Rs. 2-10. In the plain circle of Narsinghpur, *mund* was valued at Rs. 1-14, 1st-class *patarua* at Rs. 2, 2nd-class *patarua* at Rs. 1-8 and *ritua* at 12 annas. The value of the other soils decreased in the river and hill circles in much the same proportion as *kābar*. The high valuation given to first-class *patarua* may perhaps be explained by supposing it to have been the soil now known as *kachhār*. For the produce rates the outturn of wheat was put at fourfold the seed or 480 lbs. per acre. There can be little doubt that this was considerably too low an estimate, the standard outturn being at present 660 lbs. The outturns of other crops are not given. In discussing the rates adopted the Settlement Officer said that he had found 'That the few villages 'which had regularly broken down under Captain Ouseley's 'settlement had been assessed at rates exceeding one rupee 'per cultivated acre. By further inquiry it seemed to be 'established that no ordinary village had passed unscathed 'through an assessment of Rs. 1-4 per cultivated acre. The 'conclusion was that the debateable ground lay between 'rates of Re. 1 and Rs. 1-4, but that every step beyond the

'limit of Rs. 1-4 needed the most exceptional caution.' The assessment first proposed for the Gādarwāra pargana gave an all-round acreage rate of 12 annas per cultivated acre. This was reduced by the Settlement Commissioner to a figure which gave an acreage rate of 11 annas 7 pies. The Settlement Officer consequently lowered the rates of other parganas in a corresponding proportion. The District incidence finally however came to 12 annas. The revised revenue fixed was Rs. 4·22 lakhs which was an increase of 27 per cent. on the previous demand. After the announcement of the revenue the rental was raised, with the result that the village assets were increased from Rs. 7·75 to Rs. 8·68[1] lakhs or by 12 per cent. This last figure was made up of Rs. 6·72 lakhs cash rental, Rs. 16,000 siwai income and Rs. 1·79 lakhs rental value of 96,000 acres of home-farm lands. The revenue absorbed only 49 per cent. of the revised assets. The area of waste land which was reserved as the property of Government was 197 square miles.

Leniency of the Assessment.

142. There can be little doubt that the settlement erred on the side of leniency. As already stated the previously existing assessment was extraordinarily low. The Settlement Officer knew that within 3 or 4 years of the conclusion of his settlement a direct line of railway from Bombay would run straight through the then comparatively land-locked Nerbudda valley, but he expressly refrained from making any allowance for this in a settlement which was to last for 30 years, on the ground that the District might break down under too high an assessment in the few intervening years. The actual rise in prices was greatly understated for the purposes of assessment, while the outturn of wheat, taken as fourfold, was probably between 20 and 30 per cent. below the correct estimate. But the Settlement Officer was deeply impressed both by the injury

[1] This figure is taken from Statement X at the end of Mr. De Brett's Settlement Report. It differs substantially from that given in Mr. (Sir C.) Grant's report.

resulting from the early excessive demands for revenue and not less so by the rapid growth of prosperity under the lenient assessment which the District had then enjoyed for twenty-seven years; and he was determined not to repeat the error of the early revenue administrators or to lay such a burden on the District as would again retard its development. And naturally with the desire to avoid the imposition of an excessive revenue as his ruling motive, he erred somewhat on the other side. Nor was his action criticised but rather supported by the Settlement Commissioner who reduced the revenue-rate for the Gādarwāra tahsīl on the ground that it was somewhat higher than that of the adjoining Rājwāra pargana of Hoshangābād. The cost of the settlement was Rs. 1·61 lakhs.

Currency of the 30 years' settlement.

143. During the currency of the 30 years' settlement the District prospered greatly. The occupied area increased by 12½ per cent., the gross cropped area by 14½ per cent. and the net cropped area by 10½ per cent. The home farm of the proprietors increased from 96,000 to 119,000 acres. The statistics showed a decrease in the number of ploughs, but this was probably not real, and was due to more accurate enumeration at the recent settlement. In 1870, soon after the conclusion of the 30 years' settlement, the railway was opened to Bombay, and from this time a regular demand for grain for export sprang up, producing a large and permanent rise in prices. At the recent settlement (1891-93) the price of wheat was found to have risen by 70 per cent. and that of gram by 60 per cent. on the rates prevailing between 1861 and 1864. But these were not taken by Grant as the basis of his assessment as he did not feel assured that they would be permanent. The price of wheat assumed by him was 32 seers per rupee and on this basis the rate of 15 seers per rupee prevailing from 1885 to 1891 showed an increase of over 100 per cent. Finally the rent-roll of the tenants had been increased from Rs. 6·72 to Rs. 9·19 lakhs by the proprietors themselves.

The settlement of 1894-95.

144. The accuracy of the village maps prepared at the 30 years' settlement was satisfactory, but unfortunately no steps were taken to keep them up to date during the currency of the settlement. As the time for revision approached it thus became necessary to undertake an entirely fresh survey. This was effected partly by professional survey parties and partly by patwāris. The professional surveyors made a preliminary traverse and provided sheets for each village on which they had laid down the position of survey marks placed as near the boundary of the village as possible. The patwāris followed the professional surveyors and with the help of the marks laid down by the latter plotted the field boundaries and other details with the chain and cross-staff. The cadastral survey was carried out between 1887 and 1890, the average area surveyed by each patwāri in the last year being 4½ square miles. The cost of the traverse survey was Rs. 32 and that of the cadastral survey and preparation of the settlement records Rs. 47 per square mile. The settlement of most of the Gādarwāra tahsīl expired in 1894 and that of the Narsinghpur tahsīl in 1895. The District was brought under settlement in 1891, Mr. E. A. De Brett being appointed Settlement Officer. He brought the settlement to a conclusion and wrote the report in 1895. Mr. Hasan Khān was the principal Assistant Settlement Officer. The method of assessment was that now prescribed for the Central Provinces and included the elaborate classification and valuation of soils by relative factors as explained in the chapter on agriculture, and the determination of rents according to the soil-unit system. Only the soil-factors are given in the Settlement Report and not either the existing incidence of rental on soils nor the rates to which they were raised.

Enhancement of the rental.

145. The area in which tenants had been declared proprietors of their plots (*mālik-makbūzas*) at the former settlement was small, amounting only to 19,200 acres. Out of this an area of 1300

acres was held revenue-free from Government and was altogether excluded from assessment. Of the remaining 17,900 acres no less than 6500 or 36 per cent. were held revenue-free as against the *mālguzārs* or village proprietors; that is to say the mālguzārs had to pay the full revenue assessed on these plots to Government, but did not collect it from the tenants. Men holding such plots are generally known as *haqdārs* or *watandārs*. The tenure has arisen in cases where a mālguzār has parted with his rights in a village, reserving to himself the right to hold a plot free of revenue. In other cases such plots have been given to junior members of the proprietary body on the understanding that the income from them was to represent their share of the profits of the mahāl. In villages where such assignments were numerous, allowance was made for this fact in fixing the revenue. The payments of mālik-makbūzas were raised from Rs. 8,100 to Rs. 21,800, but much of this enhancement was only nominal, as it included the amount assessed on plots held revenue-free as against the mālguzār, while at the previous settlement this valuation was not made. Taking the District as a whole moreover mālik-makbūzas were only assessed at 63 per cent. of the deduced rental payable on their land according to the soil-unit system. The payments of absolute occupancy tenants were raised from Rs. 2·21 to Rs. 2·54 lakhs or by a little less than 20 per cent. The rents of this class of tenants had remained practically unaltered since the previous settlement, though in individual cases illegal enhancements had been made. The increase imposed was very moderate, the maximum being 25 per cent. in the Karelī-Kandelī group and the minimum 9 per cent. in the Mohpāni group. The acreage rate of the revised rental was Rs. 1-10-8. The area held by occupancy tenants had increased since the previous settlement from 122,000 to 217,000 acres under the operation of the rule by which the tenure was acquired by 12 years' possession. The rental of this class had been slightly raised by the proprietors themselves. The effect of the revision was to raise their payments from Rs. 2·90 to

Rs. 3·34 lakhs or by 15 per cent., the acreage rate being Rs. 1-8-8 as against Rs. 1-4-9 at the former settlement, an increase of 19 per cent. The revised rental was slightly higher than that deduced from soil-rates, while in the case of absolute occupancy tenants it was a little lower. Ordinary tenants had fared during the currency of the 30 years' settlement very differently from the other two classes. At that settlement they held an area of 197,000 acres at a rent of Rs. 1-5-1 per acre, but when the District was attested for the new settlement, they were found to hold 189,000 acres, for which they were paying rent at the rate of Rs. 2-2-7 per acre. The rental had thus risen by 64 per cent., but the real increase was even larger, as the quality of the land held on the ordinary tenure had deteriorated by the inclusion of newly broken up land, and the acquisition of occupancy right over much of the previous area. As the average enhancement made by the proprietors themselves had been 64 per cent., it was decided that no further increase in the rental was necessary, but that in many cases reduction was advisable. The Settlement Officer had at that time no legal power to reduce the rents of ordinary tenants, but the mālguzārs were approached on the subject, and it was pointed out to them that the revenue would be assessed on these rents, and that in the event of the failure of the tenant to pay them over a series of years, they would be liable to incur substantial loss. The mālguzārs made little or no objection and exorbitant rents were reduced, the revised rental amounting to Rs. 3·65 lakhs or Rs. 1-15-7 per acre. This was 50 per cent. above the rate paid at the previous settlement. Taking the payments of the three classes of tenants together, and including the enhancements at settlement and those previously effected by the mālguzārs, the incidence of rent per acre in occupation rose from Rs. 1-5-1 to Rs. 1-11-7 or by 30 per cent., while the sum of the payments rose from Rs. 6·72 to Rs. 9·63 lakhs or by 43 per cent. During the same period the area held by tenants increased by 11 per cent.

Valuation of home-farm land and miscellaneous income.

146. The rate adopted for the valuation of *sīr* and *khudkāsht* land (the home-farm of the proprietors) was Rs. 1-15-9 as against the incidence of Rs. 1-11-7 per acre for ordinary tenants. The quality of the home-farm land was however much superior and its deduced rental value amounted to Rs. 2-1-5 per acre. About 20,000 acres of *sir* land, which were sublet, brought in a rental of Rs. 72,000 or at the rate of Rs. 3-9-10 per acre. The area of *sīr* land was over 86,000 acres and that of *khudkāsht* 33,000 acres, and the rental valuation was Rs. 2·37 lakhs. Nearly 25,000 acres were held rent free from the mālguzārs, 14,000 acres being held in lieu of service. The rental value of this land was Rs. 42,000 and was included in the assets. The *siwai* or manorial income of the proprietors included receipts from various miscellaneous sources, such as the lease of tanks and the sale of mangoes, but mainly represented forest income, such as the sale of wood, grass, mahuā and other produce, and grazing-fees from tenants of outside villages. The area under forest and scrub-jungle amounted to 280,000 acres. Grass grown for the villagers' cattle was not included in the *siwai* income. The amount assessed was just over Rs. 14,000, falling at the rate of 10 pies per acre on the area of mālguzāri forest. This was Rs. 2000 less than the amount estimated at the previous settlement.

Comparison of assets.

147. The gross assets at the previous settlement, as compared with those now arrived at, were as follows :—

	At 30 years' settlement.	At settlement of (1894-95) Attestation (1891-93).
	Rs.	Rs.
Mālik-makbūzas' payments and tenants' rental	6,80,000	9,84,000
Rental valuation of sīr, khudkāsht and land held by privileged tenants	1,80,000	2,93,000
Siwai income	16,000	14,000
Total ...	8,76,000	12,91,000

The increase in assets during the period of 30 years was thus Rs. 4·15 lakhs or 48 per cent.

Enhancement of the revenue.

148. The proportion of the revised assets taken as revenue was 49 per cent. on the average. In no entire group was more than 51 per cent. taken, while in only a few individual villages, where the existing revenue absorbed more than this proportion of the revised assets, did the fraction rise as high as 55 per cent. In numerous cases the increase in assets was so large as to preclude a full assessment being taken. In other cases the circumstances of the mālguzārs were such that they deserved lenient treatment, as for instance in cases where the number of proprietors was large, or the village profits had to be shared by superior and inferior proprietors, where the family was of old standing or had become indebted and was striving to clear itself, or had treated its tenants with peculiar consideration. Leniency was also shown in cases in which proprietors had agreed to reduce exorbitant rents and to remit arrears. The gross revised revenue as sanctioned amounted to Rs. 6·43 lakhs, being an increase of Rs. 2·12 lakhs or nearly 50 per cent. on that previously paid. The increase in revenue was thus in very nearly the same proportion as the increase in assets. The rental enhancement, Rs. 57,000, covered 27 per cent. of the increased land-revenue, and the balance of Rs. 1·55 lakhs represented the decrease in the proprietors' incomes. The revised revenue fell at the rate of Re. 0-15-3 per acre in cultivation, being an increase of 27 per cent. on the revenue-rate of Re. 0-12-0 in 1863-64. Out of the gross revenue a sum of Rs. 10,000 was assigned to private persons or temples and the net revised revenue was Rs. 6·33 lakhs. The rental incidence varied from Re. 0-14-3 in the Dilehrī-Gorakhpur group of Narsinghpur to Rs. 2-13-0 in the Chhindwāra group of the same tahsīl, while the least and greatest revenue incidences were Re. 0-8-6 and Rs. 1-6-8 in the same groups. Taking the value of the crops on the area cropped at settlement, according to the retail prices ruling in that year, the rental

imposed was equivalent to 13 per cent. of the value of the gross produce and the revenue demand to 7 per cent.

Cost and term of the settlement.

149. The term of the revised settlement was made to expire in 1910 in the case of the Narsinghpur tahsīl and in 1911 in that of the Gādarwāra tahsīl, the period varying from 15 to 17 years in different groups. The settlement was introduced during the years 1894 and 1895. Its total cost excluding the traverse survey was Rs. 1·74 lakhs or Rs. 101 per square mile, the cost of the assessment being Rs. 55 per square mile. Including the traverse survey the total cost was Rs. 2·29 lakhs.

Temporary abatements of revenue.

150. The succession of bad years between 1894-95 and 1900-01 led to considerable deterioration in individual villages. During these years the average yield of the harvest was only 67 per cent. of the normal, and the cropped area decreased from 6¼ lakhs of acres at settlement to 5¾ lakhs in 1900-01 or by 8 per cent., the deterioration being greatest in the uncertain cultivation of the jungle tracts. Remissions of revenue to the extent of Rs. 2·76 lakhs were made between 1896-97 and 1900-01. In 1902 it was decided that temporary abatements of revenue were necessary in the hilly and riverine groups. Proceedings for abatement were taken in villages in which the net cropped area had declined by 20 per cent. or more since the settlement, the assets being recalculated and the revenue being reduced in proportion to the reduction of assets. Similar proceedings were taken in other villages in 1903 and 1904. An abatement of Rs. 9000 was made in 129 villages, mainly of the Bachai-Kathotia and Dilehrī-Gorakhpur groups in 1901-02 for three years, followed by Rs. 600 and Rs. 1100 in 18 other villages in the following years. A net abatement of Rs. 9000 in the above villages was subsequently sanctioned for 3 years up to 1906-07. The loss of revenue caused to Government by these abatements will be about Rs. 56,000 up to 1907. With these small exceptions the revised revenue has not proved to be beyond the paying capacity of the

area of 3500 acres was found to be held on grain or *bhāg* rents and these were commuted by the Settlement Officer into cash rents. The share of the produce paid as rent was generally a half and sometimes as high as two-thirds. The autumn crops are not uncommonly sublet on what is called the *batia* system; the rule being that the tenant of the field sows the crop and provides the seed-grain and cattle, and the labourer or *batiādār* weeds, watches, cuts and threshes it, and receives one-third of the produce. If three or four kinds of grain are sown in the same field, he gets half the produce of one of them and one-third of the others. In Gādarwāra kodon, juār, and arhar or cotton, til and arhar with urad or mūng as a fourth ingredient in each case are commonly sown together, and in Narsinghpur rice, juār and arhar with urad or mūng. In the latter case the labourer commonly gets a half of the juār crop.

Revenue-free grants.

154. 28,000 acres consisting of villages or shares of villages and 2000 acres contained in holdings were held wholly or partially revenue-free in 1902-03, the amount of revenue assigned being Rs. 9000. The Madanpur estate of 14 villages was granted on half the revenue for two generations for good services in the Mutiny. The Barmhān estate of 7 villages is held revenue-free for the support of the temple of Lakshmī Nārāyan at Barmhān, the grant having been made by the Marāthā governor of Deorī in Saugor and continued by the British. The priest of the temple is the managing agent. About ten other entire villages are held revenue-free for the support of different temples, the grants dating from the time of the Mandlā Rājās, the Saugor Sūbahs or the Bhonslas.

CHAPTER IX.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Administrative Subdivisions and Staff.

155. The head of the District is the Deputy Commissioner, who is also District Magistrate and District Registrar. He is assisted by three Extra Assistant Commissioners, or sometimes by two of these and an Assistant Commissioner. For administrative purposes the District is divided into two tahsīls, Narsinghpur lying east and Gādarwāra west. The Subdivisional system has been introduced into the District and each tahsīl forms a separate Subdivision. The old pargana divisions are not now maintained, but the Narsinghpur tahsīl contained the Srīnagar, Bachai, and Narsinghpur parganas, and the Gādarwāra tahsīl that of Shāhpur, south of the Nerbudda, while the Chānwarpātha pargana to the north of the Nerbudda was divided between the two tahsīls. Each tahsīl has a tahsīldār and naib-tahsīldār. The civil staff consists of a District and a Subordinate Judge and a munsiff at each tahsil. The tahsīldārs have also the powers of a munsiff in civil cases and are additional judges to the munsiffs. Narsinghpur has two Honorary Magistrates exercising second class powers, while magisterial powers have also been conferred on native gentlemen residing at Mānegaon, Urnī Piparia and Bāsanpāni and on the Manager of the coal mines at Mohpāni.

Land Record Staff.

156. At the settlement of 1863-64, 276 patwāri's circles were made, the number of villages entrusted to each man varying from 1 to 19. The patwāri received usually a plot of land from the mālguzār, and grain or cash payments from tenants. In some cases the mālguzārs paid in cash. The patwāris had other sources of income, as in addition to their professional remuneration, many acted as

private agents to mālguzārs and many cultivated land. In instances in which the cash payments were small, the perquisites in grain and presents from the cultivators at the time of writing out *sarkhats* and *fārkhatis* fully compensated the patwāri, and it was estimated that not a single one in the District received under Rs. 60 a year. The arrangements were revised in 1885, and the minimum pay was raised to Rs. 84 per annum, the average being Rs. 107. At Mr. De Brett's settlement the arrangement of circles was revised, 8 old circles being abolished and one new one created. As a general rule patwāris were permitted to retain the plots which they held from the mālguzārs, but in a few cases where these holdings were so large that their cultivation interfered with the patwāri's work, they were assessed to rent and made over to the mālguzār or to a tenant, if possible a relation of the patwāri, and a cash payment was substituted for the grant of land. The patwāri cess due from the mālguzārs was fixed at 4½ per cent. of the land revenue, to be paid with the second instalment. In cases where the patwāri held land, the rental value of the holding was set off against the amount of the patwāri cess. The payments of tenants were commuted into cash at the rate of 3 pies per rupee of rental. The patwāri was left to make these collections himself, as this would help him to keep in touch with the tenants, and also it was hoped to ensure that their receipt-books were regularly written up. The minimum pay of a patwāri was raised to Rs. 96 per annum, and three scales of salary were fixed at Rs. 100, Rs. 120 and Rs. 150. Excessive salaries were reduced, life-allowances being granted to the present incumbents. In one circle the pay was Rs. 304, but in no other did it exceed Rs. 225. A sum was also provided from which special allowances could be given to deserving patwāris for good work. The effect of the arrangement was to raise the average pay, including allowances, from Rs. 107 to Rs. 118, and if the little perquisites from non-agriculturists are taken into account, the average pay is not less than Rs. 10 per mensem. The total payments by mālguzārs and tenants come to

Rs. 42,000 as against Rs. 30,000 under the arrangements before the settlement. The staff now consists of a Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Land Records, 8 Revenue Inspectors, and 271 patwāris, the 269 circles fixed at Mr. De Brett's settlement having been increased by 2 circles transferred from Saugor. The headquarters of Revenue Inspectors are at Karelī, Chhindwāra, Bachai, Themī, Sihorā, Dobhī, Bābai and Chīchli. Each Revenue Inspector has on an average 34 patwāris to supervise, and each patwāri a circle of 4 villages. The average area of cultivated land in each circle was 2500 acres at settlement. The patwāris are mainly Kāyasths and taken as a body are intelligent and hardworking, though some are inclined to be unpunctual and inattentive to orders.

Litigation and crime.

157. The average annual number of civil suits instituted during the decade ending 1901 was just under 5000 or about one to every sixteen houses according to the population in 1891. During the years 1902-04 the average number of institutions fell to 3000 or about one to every twenty-three houses on the population in 1901, this being slightly higher than the provincial average. The District was until recently noted for the degree and intricacy of its civil litigation, the indulgence in which has impoverished many families of old standing. Suits between landlord and tenant and mortgage suits are numerous. Serious crime, which was common in the District some years ago, is now rare. The more prevalent forms of crime were robbery and dacoity and cattle-theft, the average annual number of cases of cattle-theft for the decade ending 1901 having been 101, and those of robbery and dacoity 30. Both these forms of crime have been much rarer in recent years.

Registration.

158. The District has 4 registration offices including that of the District Registrar at headquarters and sub-offices at Narsinghpur, Gādarwāra and Barmhān. All the sub-registration offices have special salaried sub-registrars. At the commencement of the decade, 1891—1901, the number of documents registered annually was from 2500 to 3000,

and the receipts were about Rs. 9000. In recent years up to 1904 the number of documents has fallen to about 1000, and the annual receipts to about Rs. 5000.

Statistics of revenue.

159. The following statement shows the revenue of the District under the principal heads at the end of the last three decades and in 1902-03 and 1903-04 :—

Year.	Land Revenue.	Cesses.	Forests.	Stamps.	Excise.	Income-tax.	Registration.	Other receipts.	Total.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1880-81 ..	3,94,810	28,424	12,154	18,147	60,535	..	4,235	20,344	6,10,649
1890-91 ..	4,09,987	40,808	28,178	1,01,696	68,217	14,331	8,150	41,080	7,24,147
1900-01 ..	7,01,113	52,572	12,692	96,571	40,577	12,532	5,341	25,102	9,66,455
1902-03 ..	6,84,210	81,889	15,921	77,705	44,208	11,790	4,487	19,907	9,40,117
1903-04 ..	6,45,863	59,358	20,618	60,342	54,093	8,458	5,152	5,955	8,59,939

The collections of land-revenue in 1900-01 and 1902-03 were swollen by arrears. Receipts under stamps have considerably declined since 1891; the decrease in the realisations from income-tax is partly to be accounted for by the remission of the Pāndhri tax and the exemption of incomes under Rs. 1000 from taxation.

Excise.

160. Up to 1905 the excise system in force in the District consisted of a Sadr Distillery at Narsinghpur which supplied liquor to an area of 872 square miles or rather less than half the District and of outstills for the remaining area. A still-head duty of 2 annas per seer (2 lbs.) was levied on the mahuā used for the manufacture of liquor at the Sadr Distillery. In 1903-04 the number of outstills was 17 and the total number of shops for the retail sale of country liquor 90, giving an average of one shop to every 22 square miles and 3500 persons as against the provincial figures of 12 square miles and 1400 persons. The number of shops in proportion both to area and population was smaller than in any other District of the Province except Saugor, Damoh and Bilāspur. The revenue from country liquor amounted to about Rs. 20,000 at the com-

mencement of the decade, 1890-91, but fell to Rs. 5000 to Rs. 10,000 in the latter part of the decade ; it increased to nearly Rs. 17,000 in 1903-04, this figure being the lowest in the Province with the exception of Damoh. The incidence per head of population was only 10 pies as against the Provincial figure of 2 annas 8 pies, and considering the wealth of the District, this figure is absurdly low. The new excise arrangements had not been introduced in 1905-06. Only one shop is licensed for the sale of *tāri* and the consumption of foreign liquors is insignificant.

Opium and Gānja.

161. The income from opium was Rs. 33,000 in 1890-91 ; it fell to below Rs. 20,000 in 1897-98 and had increased to Rs. 29,000 in 1903-04. The incidence per head of population in 1903-04 was 1 anna 6 pies or practically the same as the Provincial figure. In this year 33 shops were licensed for the sale of opium, or one for every 60 square miles and 11,000 persons. A certain amount of opium smuggling goes on from the adjoining territory of Bhopāl. Opium is smuggled in specially constructed hollow axles of carts, or in pots of *ghī*, oil or sugar, in the centre of cow-dung cakes or in bundles of grass and firewood. The number of shops for the sale of gānja in 1903-04 was 44 or one to every 45 square miles and 7000 persons. The annual revenue was nearly Rs. 9000 in 1890-91 ; it fell to below Rs. 5000 in 1897-98 and had recovered to Rs. 8000 in 1903-04. The incidence of revenue from gānja in that year was 5 pies per head of population as against the Provincial figure of 4 pies.

District Council and Local Boards.

162. The management of rural schools, dispensaries and pounds and of minor roads with ferries on them is entrusted to a District Council with 3 nominated and 11 elected members, the presiding officers being elected. The average income of the District Council for the decade ending 1901 was Rs. 55,000, the principal sources being local rates Rs. 24,000, ferries Rs. 9000, receipts under the Cattle-Trespass Act Rs. 7000, and contributions from Provincial revenues Rs. 6000. The average expendi-

ture during the decade was Rs. 58,000, the chief items being education Rs. 18,000 and civil works Rs. 26,000. The average expenditure on medical charges was Rs. 2900, on cattle-pound charges Rs. 3400, and on establishment Rs. 2000. Under the District Council are two Local Boards, one for the Narsinghpur and one for the Gādarwāra tahsīl, and each consisting of 3 nominated and 9 elected members. The Local Boards have no independent income, but submit estimates of their requirements to the District Council and suggest and supervise minor improvements. Quite recently arrangements have been made to provide a separate allotment for each Local Board to be spent at its discretion subject to the approval of the District Council. All the important executive duties of the District Council will be practically discharged by each Local Board.

Municipalities.

163. The District has 3 municipalities—Narsinghpur, Gādarwāra and Chhindwāra. The total municipal population in 1901 was 23,647 persons or 7·5 per cent. of that of the District. The Narsinghpur municipality has a population of 11,233 persons. It has a committee of 12 elected and 4 nominated members. The average income of the municipality during the decade ending 1901 was Rs. 15,000, the principal heads of receipt being octroi and conservancy dues. The average expenditure during the same period was also Rs. 15,000, the chief items being education, conservancy, upkeep of roads and medical relief. The Gādarwāra municipality had a population of 8198 persons in 1901 and a committee of 8 elected and 4 nominated members. Its average income and expenditure for the decade ending 1901 were just under Rs. 19,000, the bulk of the income being derived from octroi; about half the expenditure consisted of refunds of duty on goods in transit, and the other principal items were conservancy and education. The Chhindwāra municipality had a population of 4216 in 1901 and a committee of 2 nominated and 6 elected members. Its average income and expenditure during the decade ending 1901 were Rs. 4400, the receipts being

derived mainly from fees on the registration of cattle and a house-tax and the expenditure being chiefly on conservancy and education. The incidence of taxation in Narsinghpur in 1903-04 was 11 annas 9 pies and that of income Rs. 1-7-7. The figures for Gādarwāra are much larger owing to the fact that so large a proportion of the income consists of octroi dues, which are subsequently refunded.

Sanitation.

164. The provisions of the Village Sanitation Act are in force in Karelī. The average income of the sanitation committee during the years 1901-03 was Rs. 400. Town funds are raised for sanitary purposes in the villages of Dāngidhāna, Amgaon, Kaudiyā, Tendūkhedā, and Sainkhedā, the total income of the funds being something under Rs. 3000. The main source of income consists of cattle-registration fees. Since the institution of the Sanitary Board in 1892-93 about Rs. 22,000 were expended on the improvement of village sanitation down to 1904-05. For this sum 43 new wells were constructed and 109 repaired.

Public Works.

165. The value of the buildings under the charge of the Public Works Department in the Narsinghpur District is about Rs. 3 lakhs and the annual maintenance charges amount to Rs. 5000. The Deputy Commissioner's court-house was constructed in 1845 at a cost of Rs. 42,000, and the jail in 1829 for Rs. 53,000. The Deputy Commissioner's bungalow was rebuilt in 1902-03 after being accidentally burnt down, its cost being Rs. 20,000. The church dates from 1874, the amount expended on it being Rs. 9000, of which over two-thirds were contributed by Government. The cemetery was opened in 1838 and additions were made to it in 1891. The tahsīl offices at Narsinghpur and Gādarwāra were opened in 1872 and 1873, respectively, the former costing Rs. 12,000 and the latter Rs. 15,000.

Police.

166. The police force consists of 339 officers and men. This number includes three mounted constables, an ordinary reserve of 2 officers and 18 men, and one officer

and 17 men employed on railway duty under the orders of the District Superintendent of Police. The strength of the force is at the rate of one policeman to every 6 square miles and 931 persons as against one to every 10 square miles and 1128 persons for the Province as a whole. The total cost of the police in 1903 was Rs. 53,000. The officers consist of a District Superintendent, 2 Inspectors, 5 Sub-Inspectors and 50 head constables. In 1903 the District had 7 Station-houses and 21 outposts, the Station-houses being located at Narsinghpur, Gādarwāra, Chhindwāra, Barmhān, Chīchli, Belkherī and Tendūkhedā. Each Station-house is divided into beats, two constables being appointed to each beat, who take the duty by turns. The bulk of the constabulary are recruited from the District itself, but a proportion are drawn from the United Provinces. Brāhmans and Muhammadans predominate in its ranks, and next to them Rājputs are most numerous.

Kotwārs.

167. At the 30 years' settlement 1075 kotwārs were appointed to work in 1118 villages; but several of these were uninhabited and were subsequently included in Government forest. The remuneration of the kotwār then consisted of fees in grain from the tenants and a plot of land given rent-free by the mālguzār. The policy then adopted of making the mālguzārs responsible for the watch and ward of their villages did not however turn out a success, and it was found necessary to bring the kotwārs under the control of the District authorities, and to deal more directly with them and not with their masters, the mālguzārs. The kotwārs still continue to work as private servants of the mālguzārs, although paid very little for their services. As a rule they appear to be much underpaid, but are a very hard-working, honest and deserving body of men, and do not seem to think they are worth more than they have been getting. At last settlement (1893-94) the grain dues of the kotwār were commuted and a rate of 3 pies to one anna per rupee of rental was imposed on tenants; the mālguzārs having to pay a maximum of a quarter of the kotwār's

remuneration either by cash or by the grant of rent-free land. The number of kotwārs was reduced to 1023 for 1083 villages, but has since been raised to 1032 by inclusion of the 11 villages transferred from Saugor. Their total emoluments amounted to Rs. 40,000, giving an average of Rs. 39 per annum for each man. The prescribed minimum rate of pay of Rs. 36 per annum could not be worked up to and the minimum pay is Rs. 30. The kotwārs are principally Mehrās, and there are also some Khangārs and Chadārs and a few Katias and Chamārs.

Jail.

168. Narsinghpur has a fourth-class District Jail with accommodation for 158 prisoners including 13 female prisoners. The daily average number of prisoners in the last four years has been *1901*, 114; *1902*, 76; *1903*, 50; *1904*, 89. The cost of maintenance per head usually varies between Rs. 80 and 90. The recognised industries of the jail are oil-pressing and aloe-pounding. The oil is disposed of locally and the aloe fibre is sold to a Bombay firm. The profits on manufactures in 1904 were Rs. 300.

Education.

169. Prior to the cession of the Nerbudda territories the only institutions for education in the District were Hindi schools in which the multiplication table was taught, and Persian and Arabic schools in which the words of the Korān were learned by heart, but not explained to the scholars, while a few pandits collected private pupils and imparted to them such a modicum of knowledge as would enable them to become village priests and astrologers. Little was done for education until 1846 when the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces raised the question of establishing rural schools. In 1854 the education cess was imposed at the rate of 1 per cent. on the land revenue and raised to 2 per cent. on the constitution of the Central Provinces. The cess was apparently at first voluntary, and schools were only established in those areas where the landlords chose to pay it. On the constitution of the Central Provinces education received a great impetus

and schools were rapidly established. Narsinghpur was placed under the jurisdiction of the Inspector of Schools, Northern Circle. In 1871, 48 Government schools of all classes were in existence with 2659 scholars, and there were also 62 private schools with 1144 scholars, these numbers including 10 girls' schools with 344 pupils. In 1880-81 the number of Government schools had increased to 71 with 3895 scholars, but there was a considerable falling-off in the number of private schools. In 1883 rural schools were placed under the management of the District Council and those in towns under municipalities. In 1890-91 the number of schools was 96 with 6062 scholars and the percentage of boys of school-going age in receipt of instruction was 11. The number of girls' schools had not materially increased since 1871. In 1901-02 the number of schools was 103 with 5926 scholars, the average attendance being 3966. In 1903-04 the same number of schools contained 6110 pupils. The educational institutions in this year comprised two English middle schools at Narsinghpur and Gādarwāra, with branch schools attached to them, and vernacular middle schools at Singhpur, Karelī, Tendūkhedā and Chhindwāra, the number of boys in receipt of secondary education being 1106 or 2 per cent. of those of school-going age. There were 4 urban and 77 rural primary schools, and 11 girls' schools. The Narsinghpur Mission supports a technical school, in which different trades are taught, the pupils being principally inmates of the Mission orphanages. In some villages boys receive private instruction. The proportion of boys of school-going age in receipt of instruction in 1903-04 was 12 and that of girls 1·2. The expenditure on education was Rs. 49,000, of which Rs. 43,000 was provided from Provincial and local funds and Rs. 4,000 from fees. The District is now included in the Hoshangābād Inspection Circle and has one Deputy Inspector of Schools. In respect of the statistical returns of literacy it occupies the 3rd position in the province, 94 per 1000 of males having been returned as able to read and write in 1901. 526 females were shown as literate. About 4 in 1000 males could read and

write Urdū. The proportion of literate males in 1891 was 66 and in 1881, 45. Narsinghpur has one printing press and three monthly vernacular papers are issued in Hindī.

Dispensaries.

170. The District has 7 dispensaries, 3 at Narsinghpur including Mission and police hospitals, branch dispensaries at Gādarwāra, Chhindwāra and Tendūkhedā, and a dispensary supported by the coal company at Mohpāni. The public dispensaries have accommodation for 64 inpatients, the Narsinghpur main dispensary having 28 beds, and that of Gādarwāra 22. The police and private dispensaries can accommodate 44 inpatients. The daily average number of indoor patients at the public dispensaries during the decade ending 1901 was 27 and that of outdoor patients 300. The average number of patients treated annually during the years 1901—1904 was 48,000. The income of the public dispensaries in 1904 was Rs. 10,000, of which the greater part was provided from Provincial and local funds. The principal diseases treated are malarial fever, dysentery and syphilis. Nearly 2000 operations were performed annually during the decade ending 1901. A veterinary dispensary was opened at Narsinghpur in 1904.

Vaccination.

171. Vaccination is compulsory only in the municipal towns of Narsinghpur, Gādarwāra and Chhindwāra, but is carried on all over the District in the open season. In towns 8 to 9 per cent. of the population have been vaccinated annually during the last few years. Taking the District as a whole some 19,000 persons were vaccinated in 1903-04, the cost per successful case being Re. 0-1-7. The total rate per mille of population was 62 in this year, and that of successful primary vaccinations 47. Over 80 per cent. of the children born and surviving to one year of age have been vaccinated since 1891. The number of re-vaccinations has been about 6000 annually from 1901 to 1904. The staff employed in 1903-04 consisted of 8 vaccinators and the cost of the operations was Rs. 2000.

APPENDIX.

GAZETTEER OF TAHSILS, TOWNS, IMPORTANT VILLAGES, RIVERS AND HILLS.

APPENDIX.

GAZETTEER OF TAHSILS, TOWNS, IMPORTANT VILLAGES, RIVERS AND HILLS.

Amgaon Kalan.—A large village in the Narsinghpur tahsīl, 10 miles south-west of Narsinghpur and 5 miles from Karelī station, with which it is connected by a metalled road. It stands on a small stream called the Tinsurā. The population in 1901 was nearly 2500 persons, having decreased by 50 during the previous decade. Two weekly markets are held on Wednesdays and Saturdays and considerable numbers of cattle are brought for sale here. The fees paid for the registration of cattle form a small fund which is expended on the sanitation of the village. The village has also a weaving and dyeing industry and some trade in the forest products of gum, chironjī and catechu. The proprietor is a Rājput.

Babai Kalan.—A village in the Gādarwāra tahsīl. Bābai is a station on the railway 9 miles west of Gādarwāra. The population in 1901 was just under 1000 persons as against 1200 in 1891. There is some local trade in forest produce. The village has a primary school, police outpost and post office. The proprietor is a Lodhī.

Bachai.—A village in the Narsinghpur tahsīl, 11 miles south-east of Narsinghpur on the Lakhnādon road. Its population in 1901 was 450 as against over 600 in 1891. The village contains an old fort in which is an image of Chaturbhuj, the four-armed Vishnu. There is also a large stone, cut into the semblance of a human face, and called the head of Kīchak, a mythological personage who made love to Draupadī, the wife of the 5 Pāndava brothers. Bhīm slew him and rolled his bones and flesh up into a ball so that nobody could tell how he was killed. The stone is supposed to represent this ball.

Bachai was the headquarters of the pargana to which it gave its name containing 119 villages. The Singrī stream rises from the tank here. There are a number of betel-vine gardens and the leaf grown has some reputation. The village has a post office, police outpost and a primary school. The old proprietor was a Rāj-Gond, but the village has now passed to Rājā Gokul Dās of Jubbulpore.

Bagaspur.—A large village in the Narsinghpur tahsil, about 20 miles east of Narsinghpur. The population in 1901 was 2100 as against 2300 in 1891. The village is divided among a number of Kurmī shareholders, and agricultural disputes are frequent. A marble quarry exists here and samples of the stone have been somewhat favourably reported on in Calcutta.[1] Bagāspur has a primary school, a branch post office and a cattle pound.

Barehta.—A large village in the Narsinghpur tahsil, 14 miles south-east of Narsinghpur. The population in 1901 was 1600 persons as against 2100 in 1891. Barehtā has evidences of great antiquity, but its remains have been much harried by railway contractors. The best of its sculptures are said to have been taken to Berlin and Warsaw by enterprising continental travellers a number of years ago. Several interesting carvings taken from Barehtā have been placed in the public gardens at Narsinghpur. Nothing now remains but a small walled enclosure with a few figures placed in it. The figures are naked images of Jain gods in the sitting and standing position. They have symbols to show whom they represent, one for instance having the moon symbol which shows that it is the image of Chandraprabhā. As there are 6 idols altogether, the Hindus consider them to be the 5 Pāndava brothers and worship them as such, the sixth image being held to be Nārāyan or Vishnu, the supreme god. They are specially propitiated for the removal of cattle-disease, small-pox and other epidemics. There is also a fine carved image of *Sūrya* or the Sun, indicating that one of the rare temples of the sun formerly existed at Barehtā. A fair is held here annually

[1] See Chapter VI, Mines and Minerals.

on the last day of Baisākh *Sudī* (April-May), lasting for a week. The attendance is about 8000 persons. The black onyx-like stones with holes in them called Sulaimāni or Solomon's beads are found at Barehtā. The village has some trade in grain and *singhāra* or water-nut is grown in the tanks. It has a primary school and post office. Barehtā formerly belonged to a Jāt family, but has now been acquired by Rājā Gokul Dās of Jubbulpore.

Barha.—A large village in the Gadārwāra tahsīl, 11 miles south of Gadārwāra, and 7 miles from Bābai station, with which it is connected by a gravelled road. Its population in 1901 was close on 2200 and decreased by nearly 600 during the previous decade. The name Bārha is said to be derived from the fact that the village had 12 quarters or *muhallās*. Bārha, with a large estate comprising the country lying between Chīchli in Narsinghpur and Sobhāpur in Hoshangābād, was at one time held by the Pindāri Chief Chītu, who built a fort here. The estate and the title of Panch Hazāri or 'Commander of 5000 horse' were conferred on Chītu by Daulat Rao Sindhia. Glass bangles are made here and bi-weekly markets are held for the sale of grain and cloth. Bārha has a primary boys' school, a girls' school, a police outpost, and a post office. The present proprietor is a Sanādhya Brāhman.

Barmhan.—A large village in the Gādarwāra tahsīl, 15 miles north-west of Narsinghpur and situated on the Nerbudda, where the Karelī-Saugor road crosses the river. The population in 1901 was nearly 1500 as against just over 1300 in 1891. The village stands on both sides of the Nerbudda over which a temporary road-bridge is constructed in the open season. The junction of the Nerbudda and Warāhi rivers at Barmhān is a sacred place and a large fair is held here in January. A number of temples have been constructed at Barmhān, and fine flights of steps leading up from the Nerbudda on the northern bank. The large temple on the southern bank of the river is called Rānī Durgāvati's, as it is supposed to have been built by the famous queen of the Gond-Rājput dynasty of Mandlā.

Another temple on this side is called the Pisanhāri's, as it is supposed to have been built by a corn-grinder out of her small earnings. Another important temple is that of Lakshmī Nārāyan. At the top of the steps on the northern bank is a great gateway called the Hāthi Darwāza, as elephants can pass through it. This was built by the Lodhi mālguzār of Umaria. There are several temples on this side, the principal ones being the Bairāgi's temple, built by a well-known Bairāgi of Indore, and a temple of Rāma and Lakshman with a large pillar of stone in front, on which are depicted the past and future Avatārs of Vishnu. Nearly opposite to Barmhān there is an island in the Nerbudda, and at this place five *kunds* or small tanks are shown which are supposed to have been used by the Pāndava brothers during their sojourn at Barmhān. There is also a foot-print of Bhīma. The island contains a copper mine which was formerly worked by the Nerbudda Coal and Iron Company, but was abandoned as unprofitable. The fair is held in January and lasts for a month, the shops and booths being located in the bed of the Nerbudda. The attendance is about 50,000 on the principal day of the festival of Til-Sankrānt. It is a very old fair and was formerly of great importance, as it was the annual occasion for the purchase of cloth, household utensils and other important commodities for the whole District. The merchandise brought to Barmhān in 1864 was estimated by the Deputy Commissioner to be worth more than 6 lakhs of rupees, of which more than half found a sale. The principal article of trade was English cloth of which two lakhs worth were received. Next to this lac ornaments and brass and copper utensils were the commonest goods. In 1892 the value of goods brought was Rs. 2·37 lakhs and that of the sales Rs. 1·57 lakhs. The total attendance is said to have been 450,000. In 1903-04 the total number of shops was 253, most of them being for the sale of cloth, metal vessels and utensils, and provisions. Statistics of the sales of produce are not available. An agricultural and cattle show is now also held and prizes are distributed by the District authorities. The village of

Barmhān is held revenue-free for the support of the temple of Lakshmī Nārāyan.

Barurewa River.—(The sandy Rewā or Nerbudda), a stream which rises in the hills south-west of Bachai and flows north-west in a tortuous course past Singhpur, being joined by several other small streams after entering the plain. It is crossed by a large railway bridge a few miles west of Narsinghpur and falls into the Sher river at a short distance from the junction of the Sher with the Nerbudda after a course of about 30 miles. Its bed is sandy.

Bilthari.—A village in the Gādarwāra tahsīl, 10 miles north-east of Gādarwāra on the bank of the Nerbudda. Its area is 3000 acres and the population in 1901 was 1000 persons as against over 1200 in 1891. Biltharī is said to be the old Balisthali, where Raja Balī the great king of the Titans who overcame the gods, but was finally relegated to hell by Vishnu in his Dwarf-Avatār, performed a sacrifice. Some silicified fossils and zeolitic concretions are pointed out as the ashes of the sacrifice. Where such remains occur on the banks of the Nerbudda they are usually held to be the ashes of a sacrifice of the Pāndavas or other saintly heroes of mythology. The village has a primary school. The proprietor is a Sanādhya Brāhman.

Bohani.—A large village in the Gādarwāra tahsil, and a station on the railway line 20 miles west of Narsinghpur. Its population in 1901 was 1300 persons, having decreased by 250 during the previous decade. The village has an area of over 3000 acres. Bohāni is an old village. It was formerly called Kohāni, and tradition holds it to have been the place where Jasrāj, father of the famous Banāphar Rājput generals Alhā and Udal, was killed. Old cowries are dug up on the site. There is an inscription on a stone sunk in the ground near a date-palm tree which is supposed to relate to the existence of treasure buried by a Banjāra within an arrow's shot from the tree. A local incarnation of Devī called the Mīrhwāni Devī after a village which is no longer in existence, is revered at Bohāni, the goddess being supposed to

have the power of healing the blind and lepers. A small religious fair is held here in her honour in the month of Chait (March-April) at which some 5000 persons assemble. The village has a primary school. The proprietor is Rāgho Singh *alias* Chhadāmi Lāl, Golāpūrab Brāhman.

Chanwarpatha.—A village in the Gādarwāra tahsil, 14 miles north-west of Narsinghpur, on the right bank of the Nerbudda. It has a population of about 1000 persons. Chānwarpātha was formerly the headquarters of a pargana, containing 179 villages lying north of the Nerbudda. The pargana was one of the Panch Mahāls of Deorī, which were held by the present Marāthā Brāhman family of Pithoria in Saugor and were made over to Sindhia in 1817-1818 on the annexation of the Saugor and Nerbudda territories. The Panch Mahāls were placed under British management in 1826 as part payment for the Gwalior contingent and were ceded in 1860. Chānwarpātha was the headquarters of a tahsīl until 1876. The village contains an old Gond fort, of which the gateway, part of the wall, and a bastion are still standing. The village has a primary school. It is held in shares by Seth Dālchand Palliwāl Brāhman and an Agarwāl Baniā.

Chauragarh.—A ruined hill fort in the Gādarwāra tahsīl, in the south-west of the District, about 20 miles from Narsinghpur. Chaurāgarh played a considerable part in the history of the District[1] during the Gond and Marāthā periods and was at that time a famous stronghold. It embraced within its circle of defences two hills, and the plateau enclosed is about 800 feet above the level of the Nerbudda valley. The northern, eastern and western faces of the fort are scarped for several hundred feet, and water was obtained all the year round inside, numerous masonry tanks having been constructed to catch the rainfall and receive the drainage of the two hills enclosed, which are divided by a dip of about 300 feet. A hillock to the south of the fort is called the Bundelā Kot, in commemoration of a traditional Bundelā attack. The en-

[1] See Chapter II.

closed hill to the west contained ruins of the palaces of the old Gond Rājās, and that to the east the remains of buildings erected by the Nāgpur Government for infantry, cavalry and artillery. The whole place is now overgrown with forest and is never visited. Of the interior buildings little except the foundations remain. Of the outer walls some portions are still standing, but they are for the most part also in ruins.

Chhindwara (23° 2′ N. and 79° 29′ E.).—A town in the Narsinghpur tahsīl on the small stream of the Aibnā. It is a station on the railway 23 miles north-east of Narsinghpur and 583 from Bombay, the station being usually called Gotegaon. The population in 1901 was 4200 as against 3800 in 1891. Chhindwāra is on the old trunk road to the Deccan and was established in 1824 by Sir W. Sleeman for the convenience of travellers through the Nerbudda valley, at the time when this road was infested by Thags. The name means 'The village of the *chhīnd* or date-palm trees' and the town is sometimes called 'Chhotā Chhindwāra' to distinguish it from the headquarters town of the Chhindwāra District. Chhindwāra was created a municipality in 1867 and the average municipal receipts for the decade ending 1901 were Rs. 4400. The receipts are mainly derived from a house-tax and from fees on the registration of cattle. The expenditure is principally on sanitation, the upkeep of roads and the municipal schools and dispensary. A large weekly cattle-market is held here at which about 1000 head of cattle change hands on an average. It has some trade in cloth andgrain. A cotton ginning factory belonging to Rājā Gokul Dās was opened in 1903, the initial expenditure being Rs. 30,000. The municipal area includes three villages Chindorī, Chhindwāra and Simrī all of which are owned by Rājā Gokul Dās. The area of nazūl or Government land is about 200 acres. Chhindwāra has a vernacular middle school, with 142 pupils in 1904, and a girls' school. It has also a dispensary with accommodation for 14 indoor patients, a police Station-house and a post office.

Chichli.—A large village in the Gādarwāra tahsīl about seven miles south-east of Gādarwāra near the branch line to Mohpāni. Chīchli is the headquarters of an old Gond family with an important estate. Some generations ago the estate was divided between two brothers, one retaining Chīchli with the villages east of the Chītārewā river, while the other took those west of the river and fixed his residence at Gangai. Chīchli and Gangai stand on the left and right banks of the Chītārewā within a mile of each other. The population of the village was 1800 in 1901 as against nearly 2400 in 1891. The proprietor is Rājā Bijaya Bahādur Rāj-Gond. His family have always been faithful to the Government for the time being; in 1809 Rājā Sangrām Singh of Chichli stood manfully by the defeated representative of the Nāgpur Government and distinguished himself in a skirmish by which the Pindāris received a decided check. In 1842 and 1857 the Chīchli Rājās gave loyal support to the British Government. Chīchli is now best known for a considerable brass and bell-metal industry. About 150 houses of Kasārs, Tamerās and Audhia Sonārs are engaged in the trade, and bell-metal vessels and ornaments of good quality are turned out. The village has a primary school, a post office and a police Station-house.

Chitarewa River (Sitarewa).—A river which rises in the hills of Chhindwāra District and joins the Shakkar after a course of about 50 miles, a mile above the railway bridge at Pātlon near Gādarwāra. At Mohpāni the coal measures worked by the Nerbudda Coal and Iron Company are exposed in the bed of the river, which subsequently passes the villages of Gangai and Chīchli, facing each other on its banks. Its course is rocky and its stream rapid and irregular. The name is either Chītārewā, the Leopard river, or Sītārewā, Sītā's river. Rewā was the old name of the Nerbudda and was adopted to signify a river generically.

Dangidhana.—A small village in the Narsinghpur tahsīl, 5½ miles south-east of Narsinghpur on the Lakhnādon road. Its population is about 200 persons. Dāngidhāna has the

largest weekly cattle-market in the Narsinghpur tahsīl. It is held on Mondays. Some Rs. 500 are realised annually from fees on the registration of cattle and are expended on the sanitation of the village. The proprietor is a Lodhī.

Dhilwar.—A small village in the north-west of the Gādarwāra tahsīl, about 25 miles from Narsinghpur and to the north of the Nerbudda. The population is about 300 persons. The village gave its name to the Madanpur-Dhilwar estate which was granted on half the revenue for two generations to Dīwān Nizām Singh, Rāj-Gond of Madanpur, for his loyal conduct in 1857. It contains the remains of a Gond fort and a picturesque old well.

Dobhi.—A large village in the Gādarwāra tahsīl, 26 miles north-west of Narsinghpur on the Barmhān-Tendūkhedā road. Its area is over 3000 acres and the population was nearly 2000 in 1901, having decreased by about 100 during the previous decade. It has a primary school, post office and a police outpost. An inspection hut has been erected here. The proprietors are Kirārs.

Dudhi River. (The milky stream)—a small river which rises in Chhindwāra and falls into the Nerbudda after a course of about 66 miles, during the greater part of which it forms the boundary between Narsinghpur on the west and Hoshangābād on the east. It is crossed by a railway bridge near the village of Junhetā in Hoshangābād. Its bed is sandy.

Gadarwara Tahsil.—The western tahsīl of the District lying between N. Lat. 22° 38′ and 23° 15′ and E. Long. 78° 27′ and 79° 4′. The tahsīl forms the western half of the District and resembles Narsinghpur in its main characteristics. It is bounded on the north by the Saugor District and Bhopāl State, the Sindhor and Nerbudda rivers separating it from Bhopāl. On the east lies the Narsinghpur tahsīl, on the south the hills of the Chhindwāra District and on the west the Hoshangābād District, with the Dudhī river forming a natural boundary for some distance. The area north of the Nerbudda is a patch of good land fringed by hills on the north and the ravines

Descriptive.

of the river on the south. South of the Nerbudda comes first a strip of land also cut up by ravines, and then a black-soil plain of great fertility devoted to the cultivation of wheat and gram. As the hills are neared, the soil becomes mixed with sand, and rice and kodon-kutkī are grown. This sandy belt is dotted with mahuā trees. The area of the tahsīl is 870 square miles or nearly 200 square miles less than that of Narsinghpur. 63 square miles of the total area are occupied by Government forest.

Population.

The population in 1901 was 165,213 persons, in 1891, 194,225, and in 1881, 189,837. The increase between 1881 and 1891 was 2·3 per cent. During the last decade the population decreased by 14·9 per cent. as against 14 per cent. in Narsinghpur. The density of population is 190 persons per square mile, Gādarwāra being much more thickly populated than Narsinghpur, where the density is only 136. The tahsīl contains one town, Gādarwāra, and 485 villages. Ten villages are situated in Government forest and managed by the Forest Department and 54 are uninhabited. The following villages had a population of over 1000 persons in 1901 :—Amagaon, Bohāni, Bārha, Basuria, Banwāri, Bilehrā, Bhaterā, Bamhorī, Chandankhedā, Chīchli, Dobhī, Gangai, Karapgaon, Kalyānpur, Kaudiyā, Khulrī, Palohā, Sadūmar, Singhpur, Sainkhedā, Shāhpur, Tuyāpāni, Tūmra, Tendūkhedā.

Agriculture.

The description of soils given in the chapter on agriculture applies without variation to the tahsīl. Excluding Government forest 68 per cent. of the available area was occupied for cultivation in 1902-03 as against 69 per cent. at settlement (1891-93). In the central portion of the tahsīl cultivation is very close, the proportion rising to 85 to 86 per cent. in the Nandner and Bohāni groups. The proportion of the total area occupied is higher in Gādarwāra than in Narsinghpur. The cultivated area in 1903-04 was 329,000 acres as against 342,000 acres at settlement, and the gross cropped area 313,000 as against 337,000,

of which 8000 and 11,000 acres respectively were double-cropped. The following statement shows the area under the principal crops at settlement and during the years 1900—1904 :—

Year.	Wheat and wheat-gram.	Rice.	Lin-seed	Gram.	Ko-don.	Juār	Til.	Total cropped area (includes double-cropped area).
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
At last settlement.	123,015	17,384	1,660	39,447	43,176	...	...	336,561
1900-02 ...	82,212	28,590	3,663	21,682	47,282	17,483	26,090	312,344
1901-03 ...	96,238	22,859	1,950	24,418	34,290	11,714	21,408	308,834
1902-03 ...	82,729	23,774	1,679	31,672	45,676	18,728	35,708	327,158
1903-04 ...	103,321	17,662	2,237	39,672	38,360	9,084	23,054	312,886
Percentage of area under different crops in 1903-04 on the total cropped area.	33	5½	...	12½	12	3	7	...

The decline in cropping since settlement is mainly under wheat and wheat-gram. Gādarwāra grows less linseed and juār than Narsinghpur and more kodon.

Land-revenue.

The land-revenue at the 30 years' settlement was Rs. 2·10 lakhs and absorbed 48 per cent. of the assets. At last settlement this was raised to Rs. 3·05 lakhs, giving an increase of 45 per cent. on the figure of the previous settlement as against the District figure of 50 per cent. and absorbing 50 per cent. of the assets. Since the

settlement some temporary abatements have been made, and the demand in 1902-03 was Rs. 2·95 lakhs, the demand for cesses in the same year being Rs. 23,000. The average rental incidence per occupied acre was Rs. 1-9-8 and the revenue incidence Re. 0-14-3. At last settlement the tahsīl was divided into the following 5 assessment groups, the number of villages contained by each being noted in brackets against it:—Dobhī (92), Mohpāni (84), Chānwarpātha (93), Nandner (106), Bohāni (100). The Bohāni group had the highest assessment with a revenue-rate of Rs. 1-1-8, Dobhi coming next with Re. 0-15-7, Chānwarpātha next with Re. 0-14-0, Nandner next with Re. 0-13-5, while the hill-group of Mohpāni was the most lightly assessed with a rate of Re. 0-10-0.

Miscellaneous.

At the 30 years' settlement the Shāhpur pargana included the bulk of the Gādarwāra tahsīl south of the Nerbudda, while the villages to the north were included in Chānwarpātha. The distribution of parganas seems to have varied at different periods, as Bārha, Sainkhedā and Palohā appear at one time to have been pargana headquarters. The tahsīl is divided into four Revenue Inspectors circles with headquarters at Sihorā, Dobhī, Bābai and Chīchli and 135 patwāris' circles. It contains three police Stationhouses at Gādarwāra, Chīchli, and Tendūkhedā and 9 outposts.

Gadarwara Town (22°55′N. and 78° 48′E.)—The headquarters town of the Gādarwāra tahsīl. It is on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, 29 miles south-west of Narsinghpur and 536 from Bombay. The town is about 1½ miles from the station and stands on the left bank of the Shakkar river. Its name is a contraction of Gadariakhedā or the village of the shepherds. The Marāthā governor, Nāwāb Sādik Ali Khān, selected Gādarwāra as his headquarters in 1806, and its commercial importance dates from this period. The population in 1901 was 8200 persons as against 8800 in 1891. Gādarwāra was created a municipality in 1867, and the average municipal receipts for the decade ending 1901

were Rs. 19,000. The net income of the municipality excluding octroi refunds in 1903-04 was Rs. 21,000, and its expenditure Rs. 35,000. The bulk of the receipts are derived from octroi, but a large proportion of the income under this head is subsequently refunded on goods in transit. The expenditure is mainly on conservancy and the upkeep of the municipal schools and dispensary. The water-supply is obtained from the river Shakkar and from a number of wells. Gādarwāra is the largest exporting station in the District for the local products of *ghī* (melted butter) and grain. There is a considerable weaving and dyeing industry; country shoes and earthen pots are made here and there are one or two wood-carvers. A cotton-ginning factory was opened in 1904, being the property of a small company of Bombay Bohrās. It employs some 80 operatives for the four or five months during which it works, and disposed of cotton to the value of about one lakh in 1902-03. The decline in population is probably to be attributed to the depressed condition of the local hand industries. Two weekly markets are held, one on Monday and one on Friday. A number of bankers and moneylenders reside in Gādarwāra, and it has some Hindu and Jain temples of average merit. A town hall was erected in 1886 in commemoration of the Jubilee at a cost of Rs. 10,000. The educational institutions comprise an English middle school with 104 pupils in 1903-04, two branch schools and a girls' school. There is a dispensary with accommodation for 22 inpatients, a police Station-house and a combined post and telegraph office. A dâk bungalow and sarai have been erected near the railway station. The municipality comprises parts of Gādarwāra and of four other villages, the area of *nazūl* or Government land being only 46 acres. The proprietors of Gādarwāra are Kāyasths.

Hiran River.—(The black-buck)—A small but rapid river rising in a tank in the village of Kundam in Jubbulpore. It forms the boundary between the Narsinghpur and Jubbulpore Districts for the last few miles of its course and joins the Nerbudda at Sānkal on the border.

Imjhira.—A village in the Gādarwāra tahsīl, about 28 miles from Narsinghpur on the Barmhān-Tendūkhedā road. Its population in 1901 was about 900 persons. Imjhirā is the head-quarters of a well-known Lodhī family, whose representative, Rao Sūrat Singh, did good service against the rebels in 1857. The Saugor rebels assisted by Delan Shā of Madanpur and others from Narsinghpur invaded the District, but were resisted by the police of Tendūkhedā, aided by Rao Sūrat Singh with some matchlockmen. The village of Imjhirā was burnt, but the rebels received a decided check and were almost immediately dispersed and driven back to Saugor by the Deputy Commissioner, Captain Ternan.

Jhiria—A small village in the Gādarwāra tahsīl, 8 miles from Gādarwāra on the road to Sainkhedā. The village contains the image of the Badhai Devī, an incarnation of the goddess who is locally celebrated. A small religious fair is held here in her honour in the month of Chait (March-April), at which some 5000 persons assemble. The goddess is believed to be able to cure lepers and restore sight to the blind. The proprietor of Jhiria is a Bengāli Kāyasth.

Kandeli.—A village included in Narsinghpur municipality. Kandelī includes the portion of the town to the east of the Singrī stream, and the Government offices and the houses of the European community are situated in it. The separate population of Kandelī was 6900 in 1901 and 5400 in 1891. This population is included in the Narsinghpur municipality. The proprietors of Kandelī are a Kurmī family.

Kareli—A village in the Narsinghpur tahsīl, and a railway station, 10 miles from Narsinghpur towards Bombay. Its population is 4000 persons. Prior to the construction of the Bīna-Katnī branch of the Indian Midland Railway, the metalled road from Saugor crossing the Nerbudda at Barmhān brought the bulk of the produce of the Saugor District to Karelī station. A mail cart ran from Karelī to Saugor, a distance of 75 miles. The trade of Karelī has now considerably declined, but it is still the exporting station for the southern parts of the Rehlī tahsīl of Saugor and the north of Narsinghpur. Karelī was formerly a municipality,

but its municipal constitution was abolished in 1897, and the provisions of the Village Sanitation Act were introduced. The annual receipts of the sanitary fund are about Rs. 400. A weekly market is held on Wednesdays. A cotton-ginning factory, the property of Rājā Gokul Dās, was opened in 1904. Karelī has a vernacular middle school with 96 pupils and a girls' school. There is a dâk bungalow near the station. The proprietor is a Jāt.

Kaudiya.—A large village in the Gādarwāra tahsil about two miles from Gādarwāra on the old Bombay road. Its population in 1901 was 2500 persons as against 3200 in 1891. The importance of Kaudiyā in past times was due to the fact that it was a considerable cotton-mart, but its proximity to Gādarwāra is probably the cause of the present decline in the population, the latter town being in a more favourable position for the local trade. Kaudiyā has a bi-weekly cattle-market, which is the largest in the Gādarwāra tahsīl. Fees on the registration of sales of cattle amount to about Rs. 900 annually, which sum is applied to the sanitation of the village. The village belonged to the Gangai Rāj-Gond family, but was held in inferior proprietary right by a Sanādhya Brāhman. It has recently been sold to the Kalār family of Sainkhedā.

Macharewa River.—(The muddy river). A stream which rises in the Seonī District and flows through the Sātpurā hills for the greater part of its course. Soon after emerging from the hills it falls into the Sher river, a few miles east of Bachai after a course of about 40 miles. It is essentially a mountain torrent, and its rapid stream scores the country with ravines on either side of its course. Coal measures are exposed in the river about two miles above its junction with the Sher.

Mohpani.—A village in the Gādarwāra tahsīl, 11 miles south of Gādarwāra with which it is connected by a branch line of railway and on the Chītārewā river. Mohpāni was the headquarters of the Nerbudda Coal and Iron Company, which has worked the coal mines here for a period of about 40 years. The mines were sold to the Great Indian Penin-

sula Railway in 1904. The population of the village was about 500 persons in 1901 as against just over 200 in 1891. This figure does not include the operatives in the mines, of whom there were about 800 in 1904. Mohpāni has a primary boys' school and girls' school, a police outpost, a combined post and telegraph office, and a dispensary maintained by the Coal Company. The manager of the mines is an Honorary Magistrate.

Narsinghpur Tahsil.—The eastern tahsīl of the District lying between N. Lat. 22° 37′ and 23°13′ and E. Long. 79° 1′ and 79° 38′. It is bounded on the north by the Saugor, Damoh and Jubbulpore Districts; on the east by Jubbulpore and Seonī; south by Chhindwāra and west by the Gādarwāra tahsīl. The features of the tahsil are practically the same as those of the District. It may be divided into three belts of land, the first containing the villages near the Nerbudda river, where the soil has been impoverished by the action of drainage and cut up into numerous ravines, the second consisting of the rich black-soil villages which contain the best wheat-growing land, and the third the sandy and stony tract leading up to the hills on the south. Here wheat gives place to rice, kodon and kutkī. The Nerbudda flows through the north of the tahsil, and the other principal rivers are the Sher, the Māchārewā, and the Bārūrewā. The total area is 1068 square miles or slightly more than half of that of the District. 186 square miles are included in Government forest.

Description.

The population of the tahsīl in 1901 was 148,738 persons. In 1902, 11 villages of the Saugor District were transferred to Narsinghpur, and the adjusted figure of population is 150,305. The population in 1891 was 172,801, and in 1881, 175,336. In contradistinction to the general area of the Province there was an actual decrease of population between 1881 and 1891. The causes for this seem to have been the unhealthy character of the seasons during several years of the decade, numerous outbreaks of cholera, and a small

Population.

amount of emigration into the Harrai tract of Chhindwāra. The tahsil has long been fully cultivated and there is little scope for the growth of the population living on the land unless the produce is increased by improved methods of agriculture. Between 1891 and 1901 the decrease of population was 24,000 persons or 14 per cent., this figure being nearly equal to the District percentage. The density of population in 1901 was 143 persons per square mile. The tahsīl contains 2 towns, Narsinghpur and Chhindwāra, and 628 villages, of which 106 are uninhabited. The following villages contained over 1000 persons in 1901—Amgaon, Bagāspur, Bargī, Bochhār, Bamhnī, Barmhān, Kerpāni, Karelī, Mekh, Singhpur, Srīnagar, Kanjai, Umaria (Chinkī) and Umaria (Srīnagar).

Agriculture.

The description of soils given in the chapter on Agriculture applies without variation to the tahsīl. Excluding Government forest, 61 per cent. of the total area was occupied for cultivation in 1902-03. At settlement the occupied area was 64 per cent. of the total. Cultivation is not so close as in the Gādarwāra tahsīl, where 69 per cent. of the available area was occupied at settlement. The reason appears to be that the Narsinghpur tahsīl has a larger proportion of unculturable hilly land, especially towards the south-east; and also that it has a large number of rivers, in whose vicinity the land is cut up by ravines and is rendered unculturable. The Sher and Māchārewā have more marked systems of ravines than the other rivers. The cultivated area was 314,000 acres in 1902-03 and 313,000 acres in 1903-04 as against 333,000 at settlement, a decrease of 6·1 per cent. The total cropped area was 309,000 acres in 1902-03 as against 313,000 at settlement. This was however a favourable year for double crops which were grown on 17,000 acres as against 13,000 acres at settlement. In 1903-04 the total cropped area fell to 297,000 and the net cropped area to 283,000 acres, a reduction of 5·8 per cent. on the settlement figure. The following statement shows the areas under the

principal crops at settlement (1891-93) and during the years 1900—1904 :—

Year.	Wheat and Wheat gram.	Rice.	Lin-seed.	Gram.	Ko-don.	Juār.	Til.	Total cropped area (includes double-cropped area).
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
At last Settlement..	115,168	16,432	7,991	51,505	26,812	...	...	312,989
1900-01 ...	73,113	25,459	1,916	45,613	22,730	21,790	28,281	293,455
1901-02 ...	106,512	15,819	3,661	38,076	19,691	16,284	20,378	290,863
1902-03 ...	89,510	21,080	3,787	41,639	23,813	21,150	30,550	308,877
1903-04 ...	100,162	17,031	4,596	43,627	22,113	12,298	26,829	296,799
Percentage of different crops in 1903-04 on the total cropped area.	34	6	1½	15	7½	4	9	...

The acreage of wheat, gram and linseed has considerably fallen off in recent years, while there is some increase in that of juār and til. In spite of the fact that the total area is larger, the total crop acreage is smaller than that of the Gādarwāra tahsil. Narsinghpur grows more gram as a single crop than Gādarwāra and considerably less kodon.

Land revenue.

The land-revenue demand at the 30 years' settlement was Rs. 2·20 lakhs and absorbed 49 per cent. of the assets. This was raised at the last settlement (1894-95) to Rs. 3·38 lakhs, being an increase of 53 per cent. on the revenue before revision and absorbing 50 per cent. of the revised assets. Some temporary abatements in land revenue have been made since the settlement, and the demand for 1902-03 was Rs. 3·32 lakhs, the demand on account of cesses in the same year being Rs. 25,000. The rental

incidence per occupied acre at last settlement was Rs. 1-13-7 and the revenue incidence Rs. 1-0-3 per acre in cultivation. For the purposes of assessment the tahsīl was divided into the following 9 assessment groups, the number of villages contained by each being noted in brackets against it:—Muglī (45), Jhānsīghāt (34), Chhindwāra (62), Srīnagar (51), Dilehrī-Gorakhpur (75), Bachai-Kathotia (86), Karelī-Kandelī (88), Suplā-Themī (78) and Hīrāpur-Sānkal (99). The revenue rate per acre in each group was as follows:—Chhindwāra Rs. 1-6-8, Muglī Rs. 1-5-5, Karelī-Kandelī Rs. 1-4-1, Suplā-Themī Rs. 1-0-10, Jhānsīghāt Rs. 1-0-7, Hirāpur-Sānkal Re. 0-15-6, Srīnagar Re. 0-12-8, Bachai-Kathotia Re. 0-11-11 and Dilehrī-Gorakhpur Re. 0-8-6.

Miscellaneous.

At the 30 years' settlement the area of the tahsīl south of the Nerbudda was included in the Narsinghpur, Srīnagar and Bachai parganas and north of the Nerbudda in Chānwarpātha. The old Srīnagar pargana contained the assessment groups of Jhānsīghāt, Chhindwāra, Muglī, and Srīnagar and part of the Bachai-Kathotia group with a total of 233 villages; that of Bachai, parts of the Bachai-Kathotia. and Dilehrī-Gorakhpur groups with 93 villages; that of Narsinghpur, the Karelī-Kandelī, Suplā-Themī and parts of the Dilehrī-Gorakhpur and the Hīrāpur-Sānkal groups with 225 villages; while the Hīrāpur villages north of the Nerbudda were included in the Chānwarpātha pargana. The tahsīl is divided into 4 Revenue Inspector's circles with head-quarters at Karelī, Chhindwāra, Bachai and Themī and 136 patwāri's circles. It contains 4 police Station-houses at Chhindwāra, Narsinghpur, Barmhān, and Belkherī and 11 outposts.

Descriptive.

Narsinghpur Town (22° 57′ N. and 79° 13′ E.).—The head-quarters town of the District. It is on the Great Indian Peninsula line to Jubbulpore, 564 miles from Bombay. Narsinghpur proper stands on the west bank of the small river Singrī, and the houses on the eastern bank are really situated in a separate village called Kandelī, but are included

within the municipality of Narsinghpur. The town was formerly called Chhotā Gādarwāra, and the name of Narsinghpur was given to it, when a temple of Narsingh (the man-lion incarnation of Vishnu) was erected by the present proprietor's grandfather. The population of the town in 1901 was 11,233 persons, showing an increase of 1013 during the previous decade. The figures of population at former enumerations were *1872*, 7554; *1881*, 10,222; *1891*, 10,220. In 1901 Narsinghpur was the 19th town in the Central Provinces (excluding Berār) in population. The population in 1901 included 2200 Muhamadans and over 400 Jains. The small stream of the Singrī, though of absolutely insignificant size, its source being not 10 miles from Narsinghpur, is liable to sudden floods, and in September 1891 it rose to such an extent as to submerge the sites both of the town and civil station, and washed away numerous houses though fortunately the efforts of the District officials prevented any loss of human life. In this case the flood was held up by the masonry bridge on the Bombay road. Ultimately the embanked approach to the bridge was washed away, the pressure of the water was lessened and the flood subsided. The addition of another arch to the bridge has now increased the waterway, and will, it is hoped, prevent the recurrence of such a calamity in future. The Singrī has been dammed to afford a supply of water to the town. Narsinghpur was an insignificant village at the commencement of the 19th century, and first came into prominence when the Marāthās made it the headquarters of the force maintained in the Nerbudda valley. At the time of the cession in 1818 the District was known as Gādarwāra, but Narsinghpur seems to have been selected as its capital from the first, and the name was soon altered. Narsinghpur was the headquarters of the pargana, containing 230 villages, to which it gave its name. The public gardens contain some interesting sculptures collected by Colonel Bloomfield from various parts of the District, principally from Barehtā. They consist of pillars, doorways, beams and figures and some old guns. The most interesting is an elaborately carved doorway set

up across a path, which, with the exception of the dedicatory block upon the lintel, is in a thoroughly good state of preservation. The traces of figures on the block show that they were Rāma and Lakshman seated upon *garudas* or eagles. On another pillar is an inscription giving the name of the Jogī Makaradhwaj, with the figure 700, which invariably accompanies the numerous inscriptions of the name of this Jogī. The town hall was constructed in 1891 at a cost of nearly Rs. 13,000.

Municipality and Trade.

Narsinghpur was created a municipality in 1867, and the average municipal receipts for the decade ending 1901 were Rs. 15,000. The income is principally derived from octroi and the town also receives a substantial Provincial grant for educational purposes. The average expenditure for the decade ending 1901 was also Rs. 15,000, the chief heads being general administration, conservancy, and the up-keep of roads and schools. In 1903-04 the receipts were Rs. 17,000 and the expenditure Rs. 23,000. The town has no water-works and no tanks worth mentioning. The water-supply is derived from the stream of the Singrī and from wells. With the exception of the export of timber from the Chhindwāra forests, there has hitherto not been much trade in Narsinghpur, the adjoining station of Karelī being a more important centre. But since the opening of the railway to Saugor, Karelī has been diminishing and Narsinghpur increasing in importance. Hand-weaving and dyeing and book-binding are among the local handicrafts. The dyers are Muhammadan Rangrezes, who use imported dyes of many colours and also safflower for colouring clothes for weddings. There are also a few houses of Khatrīs who use indigo for dyeing the dark-blue and green cloth called *amowā* and *surmai*. The bookbinders who are Mochīs also make native saddles to order.

Educational and other institutions.

The educational institutions comprise an English middle school with 130 pupils, and a branch school, two girls' schools, a primary school for boys and an industrial

school supported by the Mission and a Sanskrit school supported by a society of the Aryā Samāj, of which Narsinghpur is the headquarters in the Central Provinces. There is a printing press with English and Hindi type, which issues three monthly periodicals in Hindi. The town has a municipal dispensary with accommodation for 28 inpatients, a police hospital, and a dispensary supported by the Mission. A veterinary dispensary was opened in 1904. A station of the American Methodist Episcopal Church has been established at Narsinghpur, and supports an orphanage besides the schools and dispensary already mentioned. The municipality includes the villages of Narsinghpur, Kandelī and a part of Dherwāra. The area of *nazūl* or Government land is about 550 acres. The proprietors of Narsinghpur are a well-known Jāt family, and those of Kandelī a Kurmī family, who are also the leading members of the caste in the District.

Nerbudda River[1] (*Narbadā ; Narmadā*—The *Namados* of Ptolemy ; *Namnadios* of the Periplus).—One of the most important rivers in India. It rises on the summit of the plateau of Amarkantak (22° 40′ N. and 81° 46′ E.) at the north-eastern apex of the Sātpurā range in Rewah (Central India), and enters the sea below Broach in the Bombay Presidency, after a total course of 801 miles.

Course of the river.

The river rises in a small tank, 3500 feet above the sea, surrounded by a group of temples, and guarded by an isolated colony of priests, and falls over a basaltic cliff in a descent of 80 feet. After a course of about 40 miles through the State of Rewah it enters the Central Provinces and winds circuitously through the rugged hills of Mandlā, pursuing a westerly course until it flows under the walls of the ruined palace of Rāmnagar. From Rāmnagar to Mandlā town it forms, for some 15 miles, a deep reach of blue water, unbroken by rocks, and clothed on either bank by forest. The river then turns north in a narrow loop

[1] The article on the Nerbudda river is a reprint from the draft article for the Imperial Gazetteer.

towards Jubbulpore, close to which town, after a fall of some 30 feet, called the *dhuān-dhāra* or "fall of mist," it flows for two miles in a narrow channel which it has carved out for itself through rocks of marble and basalt, its width being here only about 20 yards. Emerging from this channel, which is well known as the "Marble Rocks," and flowing west, it enters the fertile basin of alluvial land forming the Nerbudda valley, situated between the Vindhyan and Sātpurā hills, and extending for 200 miles from Jubbulpore to Handia with a width of about 20 miles to the south of the river. The Vindhyan hills rise almost sheer from the northern bank along most of the valley, the bed of the river at this part of its course being the boundary between the Central Provinces and Central India (principally the Bhopāl and Indore States). Here the Nerbudda passes Hoshangābād and the old Muhammadan towns of Handia and Nimāwar. The banks of the river in this valley are about 40 feet high, and the fall in its course between Jubbulpore and Hoshangābād is 340 feet. Below Handia the hills again approach the river on both sides and are clothed with dense forests, the favourite haunts of the Pindāris and less famous robbers. At Mandhār, 25 miles below Handia, there is a fall of 40 feet, and another of the same height at Punāsa. The bed of the river in its whole length within the Central Provinces is one sheet of basalt seldom exceeding 150 yards in absolute width, and, at intervals of every few miles, upheaved into ridges which cross it diagonally and behind which deep pools are formed. Emerging from the hills beyond Māndhāta on the borders of the Central Provinces, the Nerbudda now enters a second open alluvial basin, flowing through Central India (principally Indore State) for nearly 100 miles. The hills are here well away from the river, the Sātpurās being 40 miles to the south and the Vindhyas about 16 miles to the north. In this part of its course, the river passes the town of Maheshwar, the old capital of the Holkar family, where its northern bank is studded with temples, palaces and bathing ghāts, many of them built by the famous Ahalyā

Bai, whose mausoleum is there. The last 170 miles of the river's course are in the Bombay Presidency, where it first separates the States of Barodā and Rājpīpla and then meanders through the fertile District of Broach. Below Broach City it gradually widens into an estuary, whose shores are 17 miles apart as it joins the Gulf of Cambay.

Drainage area, tributaries, &c.

The drainage area of the Nerbudda, estimated at about 36,000 square miles, is principally to the south, and comprises the northern portion of the Sātpurā plateau and the valley Districts. The principal tributaries are the Banjar in Mandlā, the Sher and Shakkar in Narsinghpur, and the Tawā, Ganjāl and Chhotā Tawā in Hoshangābād District. The only important tributary to the north is the Hiran, which flows in beneath the Vindhyan hills, in Jubbulpore District. Most of these rivers have a short and precipitous course from the hills, and fill with extraordinary rapidity in the rains, producing similarly rapid floods in the Nerbudda itself. Owing to this and to its rocky course, the Nerbudda is useless for navigation except by country boats between August and February, save in the last part of its course where it is navigable by vessels of 70 tons burden up to the city of Broach, 30 miles from its mouth. It is crossed by railway bridges below Jubbulpore, at Hoshangābād, and at Mortakkā. The influence of the tides reaches to a point 55 miles from the sea, and coupled with the height of the river's banks throughout the greater part of its course, makes it useless for irrigation.

Sacred character of the river.

The Nerbudda, which is referred to as the Rewā (probably from the Sanskrit root *rev*, to hop, owing to the leaping of the stream down its rocky bed) in the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana, is said to have sprung from the body of Siva and is one of the most sacred rivers of India, local devotees placing it above the Ganges, on the ground that whereas it is necessary to bathe in the Ganges for forgiveness of sins, this object is attained

by mere contemplation of the Nerbudda. 'As wood is cut by a saw (says a Hindu proverb), so at the sight of the holy Nerbudda do a man's sins fall away.' Gangā herself, so local legend avers, must dip in the Nerbudda once a year. She comes in the form of a coal-black cow, but returns home quite white, free from all sin. The Ganges, moreover, was (according to the Rewā Purāna) to have lost its purifying virtues in the year 1895, though this fact has not yet impaired its reputation for sanctity. At numerous places on the course of the Nerbudda and especially at spots where it is joined by another river, are groups of temples, tended by Nāramdeo Brāhmans, the special priests of the river, where annual gatherings of pilgrims take place. The most celebrated of these are Bherāghāt Barmhān, and Onkār Māndhāta in the Central Provinces, and Barwāni in Central India where the Nerbudda is joined by the Kapilā. All of these are connected by legends with saints and heroes of Hindu mythology, and the description of the whole course of the Nerbudda, and of all these places and their history, is contained in a sacred poem of 14,000 verses (the Narmadā Khanda) which, however, has been adjudged to be of somewhat recent origin. Every year 300 or more pilgrims start to perform the *pradakshnā* of the Nerbudda, that is to walk from its mouth at Broach to its source at Amarkantak on one side, and back on the other, a performance of the highest religious efficacy. The most sacred spots on the lower course of the river are Sukaltīrth, where stands an old banyan tree that bears the name of the saint Kabīr, and the site of Rājā Bali's horse-sacrifice near Broach.

Historical associations.

The Nerbudda is commonly considered to form the boundary between Hindustān and the Deccan, the reckoning of the Hindu year differing on either side of it. The Marāthās spoke of it as "The River" and considered that when they crossed it they entered a foreign country. In the Mutiny the Nerbudda practically marked the limit of the insurrection. North of it the British temporarily lost control of the country, while to the south, in spite of isolated

disturbances, their authority was maintained. Hence, when, in 1858, Tantiā Topī executed his daring raid across the river, the utmost apprehension was excited, as it was feared that on the appearance of the representative of the Peshwā, the recently annexed Nāgpur territories would rise in revolt. These fears, however, proved to be unfounded and the country remained tranquil.

Paloha.—A large village in the Gādarwāra tahsīl, 6 miles north of Gādarwāra on the Shakkar river. Its area is 3600 acres and the population in 1901 was over 2300 as compared with 2800 in 1891. Palohā was once held by Karīm Khān Pindāri as the headquarters of a jāgīr estate granted to him by Sindhia. It has a fine tank covered with lotus flowers. There are a few houses of cotton-printers. The village has a primary school and a police outpost. It is owned by the Kāyasth proprietors of Gādarwāra.

Sainkheda.—A village in the Gādarwāra tahsīl, 14 miles north-west of Gādarwāra on the Jhikolī road, with an area of 3600 acres and a population of 2300 persons in 1901 as against 2400 in 1891. The village is on the Dudhī river Its name means 'The village of the Fakirs'. The village has a fine tank with a masonry embankment and a well-built masonry sarai. A weekly cattle-market is held here on Wednesdays at which cattle are brought for sale from the Sohāgpur tahsīl of Hoshangābād. There are also local manufactures of cloth and brass and copper vessels. A small fund is raised from registration fees on the sales of cattle and is applied to the sanitation of the village. Sainkhedā is held in three equal shares by Brāhman and Baniā families and a Bengāli Gosain. This gentleman was the Mahant of a temple in Bengal, and his *chelā* or disciple absconded with a considerable amount of money; he fled to Narsinghpur and purchased some villages with the stolen money. Five years afterwards he was detected and convicted, and the villages were made over to the Mahant, who has now settled here.

Sankal.—A village in the Narsinghpur tashīl, 18 miles north-east of Narsinghpur, at the junction of the Hiran and

Nerbudda rivers. Its population in 1891 was over 1000, but fell to 760 in 1901. The name is supposed to be derived from that of the well-known saint Sankarā Chārya, who is said to have sojourned here. An annual fair is held here in Kārtik (October-November) and people assemble also on the day of Makar Sankrānt (12th-14th January) when the sun passes from the southern to the northern hemisphere; it is a meritorious act to dive beneath the waters of the Nerbudda at the instant of its transit. About 5000 persons assemble for this purpose. The village is divided among a number of Baniās.

Shahpur.— A village in the Gādarwāra tahsil, 16 miles south-west of Narsinghpur on the Shakkar river. Its population in 1901 was 1500 as against nearly 1900 in 1891. Shāhpur was formerly the headquarters of the pargana to which it gave its name, containing 332 villages and including the bulk of the present Gādarwāra tahsil south of the Nerbudda. The village contains a few houses of Muhammadan Rangrezes, who dye in indigo. It has a primary school. Shāhpur is owned by a Kaonrā family, who are heavily indebted, the proprietor being unable to manage his affairs.

Shakkar River.—A river which rises in the Chhindwāra District and flows through Narsinghpur in a north-westerly direction joining the Nerbudda near Sokalpur after a total course of about 70 miles. It passes Shāhpur and Gādarwāra and is crossed by a railway bridge about two miles from the latter town. Coal is exposed in the gorge where it leaves the Sātpurā range and enters the plain. Its chief tributary is the Chītārewā. The channel of the river is usually rocky and its stream rapid. The river floods vary suddenly, and at Gādarwāra people have been occasionally caught and overwhelmed while crossing its bed, which at the moment of their start may have been a stretch of sand about 300 yards wide with a small stream flowing through it. Perhaps on account of this dangerous characteristic, the river was originally called 'Suar' or pig, and owes its present title to the fact that a Muhammadan, who

disliked the former name, emptied into it a cart-load of sugar.

Satpura Hills[1] (or *Satpurās*).—A range of hills in the centre of India. The name, which is modern, originally belonged only to the hills which divide the Nerbudda and Tāpti valleys in Nimār (Central Provinces), and which were styled the *sāt putra*, or seven sons of the Vindhyan mountains. Another derivation is from *sāt pura* (seven folds), referring to the numerous parallel ridges of the range. The term Sātpurās is now, however, customarily applied to the whole range, which, commencing at Amarkantak in Rewah, Central India (22° 40′ N., 81° 46′ E.), runs south of the Nerbudda river nearly down to the western coast. The Sātpurās are sometimes, but incorrectly, included under the Vindhya range. Taking Amarkantak as the eastern boundary, the Sātpurās extend from east to west for about 600 miles, and in their greatest depth exceed 100 miles from north to south. The shape of the range is almost triangular. From Amarkantak an outer ridge runs south-west for about 100 miles to the Sāletekrī hills in the Bālāghāt District (Central Provinces), thus forming as it were the head of the range, which, shrinking as it proceeds westward from a broad table-land to two parallel ridges, ends, so far as the Central Provinces are concerned, at the famous hill fortress of Asīrgarh. Beyond this point the Rājpīpla hills, which separate the valley of the Nerbudda from that of the Tāpti, complete the chain as far as the Western Ghāts. On the table-land comprised between the northern and southern faces of the range are situated the Central Provinces Districts of Mandlā, part of Bālāghāt, Seonī, Chhindwāra and Betūl.

Geographical position.

The superficial stratum covering the main Sātpurā range is trappean, but in parts of all the Central Provinces Districts which it traverses crystalline rocks are uppermost, and over the Pachmarhī hills the sandstone is also un-

Geological formation.

[1]The article on the Sātpurās is a reprint from the draft article for the Imperial Gazetteer.

covered. In Mandlā the higher peaks are capped with laterite. On the north and south the approaches to the Sātpurās are marked as far west as Turanmāl by low lines of foot hills. These are succeeded by the steep slopes leading up to the summit of the plateau, traversed in all directions by narrow deep ravines hollowed out by the action of the streams and rivers, and covered throughout their extent with forest.

Features of the plateau.

Portions of the Sātpurā plateau consist, as in the Mandlā, and the north of the Chhindwāra Districts, of a rugged mass of hills hurled together by volcanic action. But the greater part is an undulating table-land, a succession of bare stony ridges, and narrow fertile valleys, into which the soil has been deposited by drainage. In a few level tracts as in the valleys of the Māchna and Sāmpna near Betūl, and the open plain between Seonī and Chhindwāra, there are extensive areas of productive land. Scattered over the plateau, isolated flat-topped hills rise abruptly from the plain. The scenery of the northern and southern hills, as observed from the roads which traverse them, is of remarkable beauty. The drainage of the Sātpurās is carried off on the north by the Nerbudda river, and on the south by the Waingangā, Wardhā and Tāpti, all of which have their source in these hills.

Heights.

The highest peaks are contained in the northern range rising abruptly from the valley of the Nerbudda, and generally sloping down to the plateau, but towards the west the southern range has the greater elevation. Another noticeable feature is a number of small table-lands lying among the hills at a greater height than the bulk of the plateau. Of these Pachmarhī (3530 feet) and Chikaldā in Berār (3664 feet) have been formed into hill stations, while Raigarh (2200 feet) in the Bālāghāt District and Khāmla in Betūl (3700 feet) are famous grazing and breeding grounds for cattle. Dhūpgarh (4454 feet) is the highest point on the range, and there are a few others of over 4000. Among

the peaks that rise from 3000 to 3800 feet above sea-level, the grandest is Turanmāl (Bombay Presidency), a long, rather narrow, table-land, 3300 feet above the sea and about 16 square miles in area. West of this the mountainous land presents a wall-like appearance both towards the Nerbudda on the north and the Tāpti on the south. On the eastern side the Tāsdīn Valī (Central India) commands a magnificent view of the surrounding country. The general height of the plateau is about 2000 feet.

Forests.

The hills and slopes are covered by forest extending over some thousands of square miles, but much of this is of little value owing to unrestricted feelings prior to the adoption of a system of conservancy, and to the shifting cultivation practised by the aboriginal tribes, which led to patches being annually cleared and burnt down. The most valuable forests are those of the *sāl* tree (*Shorea robusta*) on the eastern hills, and the teak on the west.

Hill tribes and communications.

The Sātpurā hills have formed in the past a refuge for the aboriginal or Dravidian tribes, driven out of the plains by the advance of Hindu civilisation. Here they retired and occupied the stony and barren slopes which the new settlers, with the rich lowlands at their disposal, disdained to cultivate, and here they still rear their light rain crops of millets which are scarcely more than grass, barely tickling the soil with the plough, and eking out a scanty subsistence with the roots and fruits of the forests and the pursuit of game. The Baigās, the wildest of these tribes, have even now scarcely attained to the rudiments of cultivation, but the Gonds, the Korkūs, and the Bhīls have made some progress by contact with their Hindu neighbours. The open plateau has for two or three centuries been peopled by Hindu immigrants, but it is only in the last fifty years that travelling has been rendered safe and easy by the construction of metalled roads winding up the steep passes, and enabling wheeled traffic to pass over the heavy land of the valleys. Till then such trade as there

was, was conducted by nomad Banjārās on pack-bullocks. The first railway across the Sātpurā plateau, a narrow-gauge extension of the Bengal-Nāgpur line from Gondia to Jubbulpore, was opened in 1905. The Great Indian Peninsula Railway, from Bombay to Jubbulpore, runs through a breach in the range just east of Asīrgarh, while the Bombay-Agra branch road crosses further to the west.

Sher River (The tiger).—A river which rises in the Lakhnādon tahsil of Seonī, and after a general course of about 80 miles through that District and Narsinghpur, falls into the Nerbudda at Rati Karār near Barmhān. It is crossed by a fine stone bridge at Sonai Dongrī on the Nāgpur-Jubbulpore road in Seonī, and by a railway bridge about 8 miles east of Narsinghpur. Its principal tributaries are the Māchārewā, Bārūrewā and Umar. Its bed is generally rocky and its current rapid, seaming its bank with ravines on either side. Coal has been found in the bed of the river near Sihorā in Narsinghpur.

Singhpur.—A large village in the Narsinghpur tahsil, 6 miles south of Narsinghpur on the Bārūrewā river. The population in 1901 was 2200, having declined from 3100 in 1891. The village was founded towards the end of the 18th century and was the headquarters of a Marāthā *amil* or *kamaishdār*, Narsinghpur then being a village of no importance. The village contains a temple of Lakshmī Kānt, which is said formerly to have given out a little gold every day from its mouth, but unfortunately does so no longer. The houses are closely built and the population includes a number of Chhīpas or cotton-printers and Golāpūrab Brāhmans, several of whom are moneylenders. The non-agricultural element preponderates. The village has some trade in grain. It has a vernacular middle school with 133 pupils in 1903-04, a girls' school, a post office and a cattle-pound. The proprietor is Seth Tikārām Palliwāl Brāhman. The provisions of the Village Sanitation Act were extended to Singhpur in 1905.

Sokalpur.—A small village, in the Gādarwāra tahsil, of about 300 persons, situated at the junction of the Shakkar and

Nerbudda rivers, 8 miles from Gadārwāra. The village contains a charitable sarai built by a Baniā of Gādarwāra, at which religious mendicants are fed. A fair is held on the last day of Kārtik (October-November), at which some 6000 persons assemble for the purpose of bathing in the Nerbudda. Shops are brought here from Gādarwāra for the sale of clothes and vessels. Sokalpur is supposed to be a specially holy place, owing to the saying of a *Rishi* or saint to the serpent god that if he went to the junction of the Shakkar and Nerbudda to bathe, he would attain to heaven without needing to be born again. The proprietor of the village is Rānī Ratan Kunwar Rāj-Gond.

Srinagar.—A village in the Narsinghpur tahsīl, 22 miles north-east of Narsinghpur and on the bank of the small Umar river. The population in 1901 was 1100 as against nearly 1600 in 1891. Srīnagar was the headquarters of the pargana to which it gave its name, containing 219 villages. It was a flourishing place under Marāthā rule, containing a considerable garrison, and was the headquarters of a Sūbahdār, an officer of some standing. An action was fought here between the garrison and a detachment of British troops in 1818. At that time it contained a population of some 10,000 persons, and the remains of large buildings, the wall round the town, and its numerous tanks and groves attest its former importance. Among the residents are a number of Marāthā Brāhmans and Muhammadans. The village has a primary school, post office and police outpost. It is held by Gosain and Brāhman proprietors.

Tendukheda.—A large village in the Gādarwāra tahsīl, north of the Nerbudda, lying beneath the Vindhyan hills. It is 22 miles north-west of Narsinghpur and is connected by a metalled road with Barmhān, where the Saugor-Karelī road crosses the Nerbudda. Barmhān is 15 miles from Tendūkhedā. The village is declining in prosperity, and the census of 1901 showed that the population was only 2000 persons as against 3000 in 1891. Tendūkhedā was formerly one of the Panch Mahāls of Deorī, made over to us for management in 1826 and finally ceded in 1860. It con-

tains a Jain temple with some stone carvings. Tendūkhedā was formerly well known for its iron industry, the iron smelted from the mines in the vicinity being worked up by a number of Lohārs in the village. Very little ore is now extracted and the industry has declined almost to vanishing point. Articles made of Tendūkhedā iron were largely sold at Barmhān fair and were preferred to any others; even now the stall-holders at the fair will say that their wares are from Tendūkhedā, though they are really made in Jubbulpore or Saugor. A weekly cattle-market is held on Saturdays, to which cattle are brought from Saugor and Bhopāl for sale. The proceeds of fees raised on the registration of cattle are expended on a small fund for the sanitation of the village. Tendūkhedā has a vernacular middle school with 111 pupils enrolled in 1903-04, a girls' school, a police Station-house and a post office known departmentally as Sāgoni Tendūkhedā. The Station-house contains a room for inspecting officers. The proprietor is a Marāthā Brāhman.

Vindhya Hills[1] (Ouindion of Ptolemy).—A series of hills separating the Gangetic basin from the Deccan, and forming a well marked chain across the centre of India. The name was formerly used in an indefinite manner to include the Sātpurā hills south of the Nerbudda, but is now restricted to the ranges north of that river. The Vindhyas are not a range of hills in the proper geological sense of the term, that is, possessing a definite axis of elevation or lying along an anticlinal or synclinal ridge. The Vindhyan range to the north of the Nerbudda, and its eastern continuation, the Kaimur to the north of the Son valley, are merely the southern scarps of the plateau comprising the country known as Mālwā and Bundelkhand. The range has been formed by subærial denudation and is a dividing line left undenuded between different drainage areas. From a geographical point of view

Geographical extent and position.

[1] The article on the Vindhya Hills is a reprint from the draft article for the Imperial Gazetteer.

the Vindhyan range may be regarded as extending from Jobat (22°27′ N. and 74°35′ E.) in Gujarāt on the west to Sasseram (24°57′ N. and 84°2′ E.) in the south-western corner of Bihār on the east with a total length of nearly 700 miles. Throughout the whole length of the range as thus defined it constitutes the southern escarpment of a plateau. The Rājmahāl hills extending from Sasseram to Rājmahāl and forming the northern escarpment of the Hazāribāgh highlands cannot be correctly considered as a part of the Vindhyan range.

Orographical features.

The range commencing in Gujarāt crosses the Central India Agency from Jhābua State in the west, and defines the southern boundary of the Saugor and Damoh Districts of the Central Provinces. From here the Kaimur branch of the range begins, and runs through Baghelkhand or Rewah into Bihār. The Kaimur hills rise like a wall to the north of the Son valley, and north of them a succession of short parallel ridges and deep ravines extends for about 50 miles. At Amarkantak the range touches the Sātpurā hills at the source of the Nerbudda. Westward from the Jubbulpore District the Vindhyan range forms the northern boundary of the valley of that river. Its appearance here is very distinctive, presenting an almost uninterrupted series of headlands with projecting promontories and receding bays like a weather-beaten coast line. In places the Nerbudda washes the base of the rocks for miles, while elsewhere they recede and are seen from the river only as a far off outline with the plains of Bhopāl or Indore spread out below them. The rocks are sandstone, of a pinkish colour, and lie in horizontal slabs which commonly testify to their origin by curious ripple marks plainly formed by the lapping of water on a sandy shore. To the north of this escarpment lies the Bundelkhand or Mālwā plateau with a length of about 250 miles and a width at its broadest part of about 225. The plateau is undulating and is traversed by small ranges of hills, all of which are considered to belong to the Vindhyan system.

Outlying ranges.

The most northerly of these minor ranges called the Bindyāchal, cuts across the Jhānsi, Bānda, Allahābād and Mirzāpur Districts of the United Provinces, nowhere rising above 2000 feet. The range presents the appearance of a series of plateaus, each sloping gently upward from south to north, and ending abruptly in the steep scarp which is characteristic of these hills. Many outlying isolated hills are found in these Districts standing out on the plains beyond the furthest scarp. One small hill, called Pabhosā, stands on the left bank of the Jumna, the only rock found in the Doāb. The Bhānrer or Pannā hills form the south-eastern face of the Vindhyan escarpment and bound the south of the Saugor and Damoh Districts and the north of the Maihar State in continuation of the Kaimur, thus being a part of the main range. They run from north-west to south-east for about 120 miles. Their highest peak is that of Kalumār which has an elevation of 2544 feet. Two other branches of the range lie in Mālwā, starting respectively near Bhilsā and Jhābua with a northerly direction and bounding the plateau to the east and west.

Elevation and drainage.

The general elevation of the Vindhyan range is from 1500 to 2000 feet and it contains a few peaks above 3000, none of which are of any special importance. The range forms with the Sātpurās the watershed of the centre of India, and among others the Chambal, Betwā, Sonār, Dhasān and Ken rivers have their sources in these hills. The Son and Nerbudda rise at Amarkantak, where the Vindhyan and Sātpurā ranges join. The rivers generally rise near the southern escarpment and flow north and north-east.

Geological formation.

Geologically the range is formed principally of great massive sandstones of varying consistency, alternating with softer flags and shales, the whole formation covering an area 'not greatly inferior to that of England' (Mallet). The range has given its name to the Vindhyan system

of Indian geological nomenclature. Over a great part of the Mālwā plateau the sandstone is covered by the overflowing Deccan trap, while from Ganurgarh fort in Bhopāl to near Jobat, the range itself is of basaltic formation, and the last sixty miles to the west from Jobat to near Jambughorā consist of hills of metamorphic rock. Economically the Vindhyan rocks are of considerable value, the sandstone being an excellent building material which has been extensively used for centuries ; the Buddhist topes of Sānchi and Barhut, the eleventh century temples of Khajurāha, the fifteenth century palaces of Gwalior, and numerous large forts at all important positions on the plateau having been constructed of this material. At Nagod and other places limestone is found in some quantity, the pretty corraline variety extracted from the Bāgh cretaceous beds, having been extensively employed in the palaces and tombs at Mandū ; and at Pannā in the conglomerate which underlies the shales, diamonds are met with though none of any great value have been extracted. Manganese, iron and asbestos are also found in various parts of the range. The lofty flat-topped hills and bold scarps which are such a marked feature of this range were early recognised as ideal sites for fortresses, and besides the historical strongholds of Gwalior, Narwar, Chanderī, Mandū, Ajaigarh and Bāndogarh, the hills are studded with the ruined castles of marauding Girasia and Bundelā Chiefs.

Forests.

The hills are generally covered with a stunted forest growth of the species found in the dry forests of Central India. Teak only occurs in patches and of small size and the forests are generally noticeable for their poverty of valuable timbers.

Mythological associations.

The term Vindhya in Sanskrit signifies "a hunter" and the range occupies a considerable place in the mythology of India, as the great demarcating line between the Madhyadesha or "middle land" of the Sanskrit invaders and the non-Aryan Deccan. The

Vindhyas are personified in Sanskrit literature, where they appear as a jealous monarch, the rival of king Himālaya, who called upon the sun to revolve round his throne as he did round the peak Meru. When the sun refused, the mountain began to rear its head to obstruct that luminary, and to tower above Himālaya and Meru. The gods invoked the aid of Agastya, the spiritual guide of Vindhya. This sage called upon the Vindhya mountain to bow down before him, and afford him an easy passage to the south. It obeyed and Agastya passed over. But he never returned, and so the mountain remains in its humbled condition, far inferior to the Himālaya, to the present day. Another legend is that when Lakshman, the brother of Rāma, was wounded in Ceylon by the King of the Demons, he wished for the leaves of a plant which grew in the Himālayas to apply them to his wound. Hanumān, the monkey-god, was sent to get it, and not knowing which plant it was, he took up a part of the Himālayas and carried them to Ceylon. He happened to drop a portion of his load on the way and from this the Vindhyan hills were formed.